THE RELATIONS OF GEOGRAPHY & HISTORY

BY THE LATE

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FIFTH EDITION

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PREFACE

EVERY reader of history is aware that he must learn some geography, if he would understand what he reads. Comparatively few however, if one may judge from experience, seem to realize how much light geography throws on history. Geographical influences account for much that happens or has happened. Geographical knowledge affords valuable *data* for solving historical problems. At the same time human action alters the aspect of those things of which geography takes cognizance: man cuts canals and tunnels mountains, drains marshes and constructs artificial harbours, though it must be admitted that these things are trifles compared to the steady operation of geographical causes all history through.

I have attempted to point out systematically how these causes work, first in general, and then in reference to the various countries of Europe. Obviously this can only be done in specimens: to do it fully would be to write all history afresh. The specimens given may however, I hope, suffice to call the attention of students of history to the modes in which geography operates, so that they may be ready to perceive its influence on whatever period or country they may be dealing with.

It is plainly impossible to supply maps enough to exhibit in detail every geographical fact to which I refer, and every historical fact connected with them. I have therefore taken for granted that readers will consult their own atlases. The only exception made is in favour of two maps of Europe, so placed that they may be easily compared. They give the physical features

identically, while the one shows the divisions into which Europe falls on a well established physical principle, and the other shows the existing political divisions.

I do not suppose that everything which I state as a fact is indubitably true, any more than that all my inferences will strike readers as unanswerable. As to the former, I have in some cases expressly said that the facts rest on uncertain evidence: perhaps I may in others have underrated, and therefore ignored, the strength of objections taken to current views. At any rate it has seemed irrelevant to enter into any examination of disputed questions. As to the inferences, some may possibly be deemed too obvious to be worth stating, others to be even more dubious than I make them. I hope, however, that I have sufficiently guarded myself against being supposed to attribute too much to geographical influences. Since they work concurrently with other causes, it is plainly impossible to determine which have in fact produced given results; all that one can say with certainty is that the geographical influences were working, and that given results did in fact follow.

I have used the forms of proper names which are familiar in English. If I were writing history, I might hesitate to speak of Charlemagne, since that form of the great emperor's name is used to imply historical opinions which I deem erroneous. For an incidental reference I only care that he shall be easily recognized by the reader. So again every English reader is acquainted with the form Lorraine: many might need to have Lothringen explained to them. Every language, English on the whole less than some others, does in fact shape for itself a certain number of foreign names, under influences which vary indefinitely. A form of name once naturalized in English, whatever the process of derivation, is lawful property to every Englishman.

I therefore have no scruple about writing Ratisbon and Basle, Brussels and Venice, in spite of the fact that their own inhabitants call them Regensburg and Basel, Bruxelles and Venezia.

HEREFORD B. GEORGE.

OXFORD,
Jan. 1901.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN the second edition I have corrected a few small errors, and altered some phrases which it appeared that ingenuity could misconstrue. More than one friendly reviewer has reproached me for not having said more about the influence of geography on the peaceful development of mankind. To have done so would have been to depart from what I undertook. I only profess to call attention to the modes in which geography influences history, with instances enough to illustrate my meaning, and to lead readers to think for themselves; and there is no need of repeated instances to show (for example) that a fertile soil favours the growth of population, or that mineral wealth is, in modern times at least, almost essential to industrial prosperity. For an opposite reason I do not care to dwell on the influence of geography upon human character. Man's environment no doubt may tell in various ways on his character, but so do many other influences. One can easily suggest that a given geographical condition is likely to affect man in a particular way, unless over-ruled by some other conditions: and this I have occasionally done. For any thing beyond this there seem to me to be no trustworthy *data*.

OXFORD,
Feb. 1903.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

SINCE the last edition, several events have happened which bear upon my subject, such as the separation of Sweden and Norway. I have carefully revised the text so as to make the statements in it correspond to the new order of things, and have taken the opportunity to add in some places a few words of additional explanation. At the suggestion of several friends I have slightly extended the original scheme by adding a chapter on India. Apart from its importance to the British empire, India is the country of all others in which the history is most visibly the outcome of the geography, if the latter term is used in its full sense, and not as denoting physical structure only.

OXFORD,
August, 1907.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

A FEW phrases have been modified because the lapse of ten years since this book was written has rendered the original wording no longer accurate; but otherwise there is no change from the last edition.

OXFORD,
January, 1910.

NOTE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

In a work of this nature, by an authority of such standing, it is clearly an editorial duty to conserve to the utmost the views and statements of the original writer. No assumption, therefore, has been made as to any modification in his opinions (e.g. on the Alsatian question) which might have been induced by the events of 1914 and after years. It has not been thought necessary to indicate every editorial amendment as such; as dealing with events since the date of the last edition (1910) they will be apparent.

The widening of interest in the study of American geography has rendered it desirable to supplement the final chapter (XXII) of the original work, and the geographical aspects of the Great War and its aftermath are amplified in a new additional chapter (XXIII). This and the revision of Chapter XXII are the work of Mr. C. B. Fawcett.

O. J. R. H.

January, 1924.

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RELATIONS OF GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

History is not intelligible without geography. This is obviously true in the sense that the reader of history must learn where are the frontiers of states, where wars were fought out, whither colonies were dispatched. It is equally, if less obviously, true that geographical facts very largely influence the course of history. Even the constitutional and social developments within a settled nation are scarcely independent of them, since geographical position affects the nature and extent of intercourse with other nations, and therefore of the influence exerted by foreign ideas. All external relations, hostile and peaceful, are based largely on geography, while industrial progress depends primarily, though not exclusively, on matters described in every geography book—the natural products of a country, and the facilities which its structure affords for trade, both domestic and foreign.

The present age, which has witnessed the practical completion of the task of exploring the earth, which has seen geology developed into a comprehensive science, and evolution established as at least a tenable working hypothesis, is in possession of the data which enable us to correlate geography with other branches of knowledge. Its facts

being pretty fully ascertained, inferences can reasonably be deduced from them; and the nature and limits of the power exercised by these facts in determining the course of human history can be with some confidence stated. Geography in fact has reached the stage at which it can be used critically.

For this very reason, perhaps, it is difficult for us to realize how recent a thing accurate geography really is. Though learned men among the ancients were aware that the earth is a sphere, the idea had gained no real hold on mankind at the close of the Middle Ages. Even after the discovery of America and of the route round the Cape, the famous bull of Pope Alexander VI assigned all new discoveries west of a given meridian to Spain, all east of it having been previously granted to Portugal, without providing for what was to happen when Spanish and Portuguese should meet on the other side of the globe. It is true that modern research has discovered traces of Europeans having reached America before Columbus, and of still more ancient voyages round Africa: but it was only when the compass had been invented that exploration could be systematic and fruitful of results. Not until the telescope and other instruments had been devised was it possible to make a reasonably correct survey. Even with these scientific aids the work went on but slowly. It is little over a century since the English claimed, as discoverers, to take possession of what is now British Columbia; and the claim was resisted by Spain, on the ground that Spain, having first reached the American shore of the Pacific, had acquired thereby a right to the whole coast. In the middle of the nineteenth century it was a difficult and adventurous journey to cross the American continent north of the United States. Then the map of Africa was almost a blank except on the coasts: the source of the Nile was still unknown, the Niger was wrapt in almost equal obscurity, and the Congo was unheard of, though of

course the estuary was known to those who had sailed along the coast. Then less was known of the Alps than is now known of the Andes: there were no tolerable Alpine maps except of a part of Switzerland. The existence of the Dariel pass was the only fact about the Caucasus in the least degree familiar, and that probably to very few except the learned, who might be aware that the Caucasian gates, as the pass was called by antiquity, had been used for 2,000 years or more. About the Himalayas little was known beyond the names of a few great peaks. The centre of Australia was utterly unexplored: New Guinea was a name, and no more. Now, there is no extensive region anywhere on the earth's surface, even at the poles, of which the general configuration is unknown, though there are still plenty of details to fill in.

It may safely be assumed that whenever and wherever civilization began to be real, men would begin to acquire some knowledge first of the land they lived in, and by degrees of other lands also. How slow their progress was may be best seen from the writings of Herodotus, himself a great traveller and a diligent inquirer, though possibly too credulous. Egyptian civilization had flourished then for thousands of years; yet the account of the Nile which he gives on Egyptian authority is correct only for a comparatively short distance up, and then plunges into *a priori* reasoning as to what ought to be, in order that the Nile and Danube may correspond. About the Danube Herodotus obviously had learned nothing, save that it flowed generally eastward across Europe, and that its mouth was in the Black Sea. Practically nothing of Europe outside the Mediterranean basin, except scraps of information derived from Phoenician traders, such as the fact of the existence of the British islands, was known to the classical world till after the fall of Carthage. Indeed it would be no great exaggeration to say that Caesar's conquest of Gaul was the first step towards

the Romans obtaining a general idea of the configuration of Europe. By that time the Celtic peoples were in possession of western Europe, and the Teutons had followed them, or driven them out, as far as the neighbourhood of the Rhine. How far westwards the Slavs had advanced by that date, we cannot even conjecture with any confidence.

We have of course glimpses, through etymology, through investigation of primitive tombs and other remains of human occupation, of a prior state of things. Fragments of at least one earlier race still survive, and there may have been others before the Basques and the Finns. We know also that successive waves of population flowed over Europe from central Asia, and geography makes it certain what their general route was. The earliest records seem to put it out of the question that they can have passed through Asia Minor. That is to say, they came north of the Black Sea, and then penetrated into the centre of Europe, partly by the Danube valley, partly by the plain of north Germany, the Carpathians forming as it were the promontory which divided the stream into two parts. There is no real doubt that Celts, Teutons, and Slavs entered Europe in this manner; and there is fair ground for supposing that the Graeco-Latin peoples, belonging in some sense to the Celtic wave, diverged to the south-west, before they would have had the great dividing line of the Alps to encounter. We cannot however affirm with anything like certainty that all inhabitants reached Europe from this quarter. In fact the probabilities seem to be decidedly the other way, as regards some at least of the peoples traceable in the Italian and Spanish peninsulas at the first dawn of history.

Something more is discoverable about western Asia, where comparative civilization dates very far back, as far probably as in Egypt. And modern archaeological investigation has revealed the existence of civilized mankind in the eastern Mediterranean from a much earlier date than used

to be supposed, men of a prior race probably to the Greek. If they knew, which is highly improbable, anything of the world outside the Mediterranean basin, they left no traces of their knowledge behind. The Greek ignorance of what lay beyond their own land, and the sea which carried their trade, was tolerably complete. Anything like coherent geographical knowledge, beyond these narrow limits, only begins with Caesar's history, followed in the next century by the *Germania* of Tacitus and the geographical work of Strabo, and later again by Pausanias.

It does not follow, because mankind until comparatively recently were ignorant of geography, that their history was not affected by it. On the contrary, the less they knew, the more influence geography was likely to have over their destinies. A tribe or collection of tribes, once started on a career of migration, would be guided in the direction of their movement mainly by the natural features of the country they were passing through. They would skirt the base of a chain of mountains, or follow the seashore, indifferent where such a course led them, because ignorant of all alike. We need always to remember this, in attempting to estimate the bearings of geography on history. If we could imagine the possibility of mankind in general having known, throughout human history, what is now known of the earth's surface, the course of that history might have been very materially altered.

In Keith Johnston's school geography there are a series of little pictures, showing what portions of the world were at different ages more or less known. They are made to look like bits of landscape seen through a break in dense clouds, and the result is to give a very vivid impression of the smallness of the area known until very recently. In one respect they exaggerate the knowledge possessed, for the true form of the land is given that it may be recognizable, whereas in fact ancient maps distort very greatly the shapes

and sizes of the countries depicted. The Hereford Mappa Mundi, a map of the late thirteenth century belonging to Hereford Cathedral, is probably known to many, as it has been published with a little book of comment and explanation. It comprehends all countries then supposed to be known, and is probably a fair specimen of such productions. The wonder however is not that such an amount of distortion was possible, but that so much knowledge was possessed before men had the compass to give accurate direction, or instruments for measuring.

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL NATURE OF GEOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCES

No one will deny, however firmly he insists on believing in free will, that the destinies of men are very largely determined by their environment. Among the many influences covered by this very wide modern phrase, the most obvious, for mankind as a whole as distinguished from individuals, are the geographical. Climate determines what men's food shall be, at any rate before extensive commerce has been developed, and whether or not they need work hard for a living. The physical features of the earth, sea, mountains, &c., go far to fix their occupations, and to decide whether they are to live within reach of easy intercourse with neighbours. The aspect of nature about them colours, and to a certain extent suggests, their ideas and beliefs. There are however other influences, perhaps too numerous to specify, which have aided in moulding the destinies of mankind. Speculations as to what *race* means are more or less futile, because verification is impossible, but it is vain to deny that different peoples do exhibit different characteristics, and these may or may not be due to some original variation not explicable by known facts. Geographical influences certainly contributed much; there were others, more or less numerous and important, which lie outside the sphere of geography. The character of a given race is the resultant of all these influences, operating parallel, or contrary, or in succession to one another: its history is

still further complicated by being the resultant of its contact, hostile or friendly, with other races, each of which has its own character.

Thus, in setting forth the geographical influences which have guided or modified history, it is necessary to guard against overstating their force. The causes really operate, but they are liable to be counteracted by other influences: all that can reasonably be said is that they tend to produce the effect named, and that if that effect is not produced, some reason must be found other than geographical. These generalizations are however none the less valuable, as materials for forming a fair judgement as to the past and rational inferences as to the future. This may be illustrated from the not incongruous field of political economy. The assumption underlying that science is that men will in general wish to act in accordance with their material interests. Given that men desire so to act, political economy lays down rules for their guidance, and points out the consequences, in the way of injury to such interests, resulting from disobeying them. Every one is aware that there are many other springs of human action. Men are governed by their passions or their prejudices, or sacrifice themselves from motives of benevolence, and so in many ways act contrary to economic principles. No sane person however would deny the truth of the conclusions of political economy, merely because its dictates do not in all cases prevail over other motives: it suffices that they hold good in the long run. The same thing is true in relation to geography. The temperate zone, or rather a narrower zone within it, does furnish the climate best suited for the development of the human race, even though men of great vigour, mental and bodily, are occasionally born in the tropics. Fertile soil and mineral wealth do favour material progress, though different peoples advance at very unequal rates. Mountains do form natural lines of separation, even though here and

there the same people are found on both sides of a chain. The sea does foster energy, and help in the general development of wealth, even though some dwellers by the seashore have not used their opportunities. The one necessary thing, if we would use geography aright, is neither to ignore these exceptions nor to mistake them for the rule.

It is plain that if we would understand the relations of geography to history, we must begin our consideration of geography by looking at the physical features of the earth, ignoring historical divisions, and this for several reasons.

1. Physical features are permanent, while frontiers vary.

2. They very largely govern the beginnings of history.

3. They affect the destinies of nations after they have been formed.

4. It is only late in history that human labour can avail to modify their influence, and at most this can only be done to a small extent.

Names are of course written on the earth's surface by man, and it is practically impossible to describe physical conformation without the use of them. It is however easy to employ names of which the physical signification is perfectly clear, though the warning is necessary that a given name may bear, or have borne, a different meaning when used politically.

1. The geologist might perhaps take exception to the statement that physical features are permanent, since his science can point to periods when what now are mountain ranges were below the sea. One event not extremely remote in geological time has modified history enormously—the formation of the straits of Dover, transforming England from an outlying corner of the Continent into a separate island. For it is evident that the insular position of England has contributed largely towards her unique *status* in the world, and so towards the settlement of north America and

Australia by men chiefly of English race, and imbued with English ideas. Moreover the same subsidence of the land which formed the British Islands richly endowed them with another essential condition for a great maritime state. The western portion of the region being mountainous, what had been the valleys formed when submerged many deep inlets into the coast, which afford numerous and commodious harbours. Geological changes however in general work very slowly; there has been hardly time, since the first dawn of history, for gradual changes to work to any perceptible extent. Arid conditions may have encroached upon lands previously fertile and populous, as in central Asia. A harbour here and there has silted up; the sea has receded or encroached along a few strips of coast. There is just enough to remind us that the earth we inhabit is undergoing, though at an infinitely slower rate, physical changes not altogether unlike those which in animals and plants we call life. Whether or not any great changes were wrought in earlier geological periods in a more rapid and violent manner, certainly nothing of the kind has happened in historical times, except on a very small scale. One or two rivers have changed their course; a few square miles here and there have been desolated by a volcanic eruption or by a landslip. The greatest change of this kind that Europe has witnessed since history began is the conversion of the Zuyder Zee, once an inland lagoon, into an arm of the sea. This added to the facilities for maritime development which Holland possessed; but it did not create them, and therefore is of little historical moment. One cannot of course say that such events are impossible. A volcanic eruption on the scale of that of Krakatau, in 1883, would suffice to destroy the greatest city in the world. Such a disaster to Rome or Constantinople in the past, to London or Paris in modern times, would have changed incalculably the whole course of history. Our knowledge however enables the experts to say that such

eruptions are most improbable except in certain localities; and at any rate they have involved, within historical memory, no catastrophe greater than the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii, unless it be the recent disaster in Martinique and St. Vincent.[1] For historical purposes at least, we are justified in saying that the physical features of the earth undergo no change of which account need be taken.

2. In the beginnings of human history, before much of the earth was peopled, the movement of nomad tribes must have been determined almost entirely by the natural features of the country. Totally ignorant of everything that was not before their eyes, they would have no motive for attempting to overcome obstacles for the sake of reaching what lay beyond. Accident or caprice might lead them to do so occasionally, but in general they would take the easiest direction in which to move. It is obviously simpler to skirt the base of a chain of mountains rather than to cross them. Fens are practically impassable obstacles; virgin forests are usually difficult to penetrate, and always bewildering. Rivers on the other hand are useful guides, and afford the easiest of routes, assuming the possession of anything like boats. Similarly it is easy to make a way along the sea-coast, and impossible to be lost while the sea is in sight. Such considerations are so obvious that they may fairly be assumed to hold good of the movements of primitive man, though of course there can be no positive knowledge on the subject.

The definite evidence which we possess as to the prehistoric races in Europe, derived from the discovery in various places of human remains dating from a very remote past, is scanty in itself, and can only be conjecturally inter-

[1] Earthquakes have of course done very serious mischief from time to time, but they do not change the face of the earth. Indeed their destructiveness consists usually in ruining the previous works of man, by throwing down buildings, or causing fires, as at San Francisco in 1906 and at Tokyo and Yokahama in 1923.

preted. We know in this way of the existence in sundry localities of cave-dwelling men, virtually mere savages, and there is a fair presumption that they were widespread. These however, whether they did or did not gradually develop some kind of civilization for themselves, disappeared before other races higher in the scale of progress, and little more can be said to be known of them than the fact that they existed. The earliest people who come in any sense within the ken of history were civilized enough to have fixed dwellings, to keep cattle, and cultivate the soil more or less. Hence their settlements would be mainly in the open country, which afforded pasture and room for tillage, largely along the coasts and river banks, which would supply fish, besides facilities for such locomotion as they needed. Under such conditions the forests would be penetrated only so far as the pursuit of game might require, the fens and the mountains hardly at all.

Again, we can only conjecture what led the early inhabitants to move ever westwards till they reached the Atlantic. It may have been the pressure of a new wave of migration into Europe from western Asia. It may have been merely the growth of population. One way or another Europe came to be inhabited, in the loose way appropriate to comparative barbarism. When the era of conquest began, ample occasion arose for the exploration of regions hitherto left without inhabitants. When a new race came to dispossess prior inhabitants by force, the latter had to escape somewhere or perish. If they could simply migrate, no doubt they did so, as the Celts apparently did before the oncoming Teutons, and earlier races before the Celts. Otherwise the hill regions, and the fens also, became places of refuge for the dispossessed tribes, where their enemies could not easily reach them, and had no motive to try, unless it were race hatred. If the pressure of the invaders was severe, the fugitives would penetrate deeper and deeper

into the recesses of the great mountain chains, and discover ways across them, perhaps to find unoccupied valleys beyond, perhaps to encounter fresh enemies. In this way, while the mountain ridges, large and small, would in general be the natural and obvious barriers between adjacent tribes, exceptions might easily arise, whereby both sides of a ridge were occupied by the same people.

As time went on, as men grew less savage and more settled, and learned to live within reach of one another without perpetual war, there would arise a need for recognized boundaries between tribes, or between aggregates of tribes that were making the first steps towards a larger union. Geographical facts doubtless in most cases determined these. A mountain chain, or a marshy inlet from the sea, or a belt of dense forest, did in fact lie between one and another, and would become the formal boundary, as having been the actual barrier separating their original haunts. By slow degrees they might find ways across, and begin to buy and sell with their neighbours, until definite routes came to be well known and more or less frequented. In the absence of any means for accurately determining directions or measuring distances, there could be nothing like a clear notion of the geography of any region as a whole. A vague knowledge such as this can be traced as early as the first faint dawn of history, and may well have existed long before.

The evidence is of course ample that geography did in fact operate in the way that *a priori* reasoning would suggest, to make the natural barriers into political frontiers, though not without exceptions. The evidence is equally conclusive that rivers acted in the opposite manner. Before artificial roads came to be constructed, rivers were the best of highways. They facilitated rather than impeded communication between the inhabitants of the opposite banks. Hence the tendency is for a given tribe or set of tribes to

occupy the whole basin of a navigable river, not the right or left bank only, while obviously the smaller streams offer no serious obstacle to a rude people.

3. The chief modes in which geography affects the destinies of established nations are through the possession of a sea-coast with satisfactory harbours, and through the protecting or isolating influence of mountain frontiers. Both of these topics are of sufficiently widespread importance to be discussed separately in subsequent chapters. Other points, such as the refuge afforded by hill regions to beaten peoples that will not submit to a conqueror, are mentioned in connexion with the countries where such things have happened. Others are merely the continuation and development of what had been operating in pre-historic times, as when navigable rivers became regular arteries of commerce. In some cases all that we can say with certainty is that given geographical conditions were favourable to given political developments, whether they caused them or not. For instance, the geographical formation of Greece, both the mainland cut up by mountains into many small sections, and still more the numerous small islands, must have favoured the development of separate city states. It would however be unreasonable to argue that these geographical conditions suggested the idea, which in fact is common to the whole Graeco-Latin race. So again it has been said that the long political predominance of feudal aristocracy was only possible in fairly level countries. This is so far true that their military strength could only be effectively exerted in regions fit for mailed horsemen to fight in. It would however be preposterous to attribute the origin of feudalism to the influence of the plains. One has never heard that the Mongols, who were all horsemen and came off the boundless steppes, developed any feudal ideas, or even the less barbarous Cossacks of later ages.

4. If geographical conditions influence history, it is

equally true that history, or rather human action of which history is the record, affects geography. The natural barriers, which once kept peoples inexorably apart, are rendered comparatively inoperative by human labour. The civilizing value of roads has been strongly felt ever since the days of the Roman empire, when the golden milestone, whence distances were measured into every remote province, seemed to symbolize the dominion of a power that for centralizing authority has scarcely had a parallel. As engineering skill and appliances have improved, the influence of roads has grown greater. Great mountain chains are now crossed by roads, even penetrated by tunnels, so that their separating effect almost vanishes, their protecting value as frontiers is greatly modified. Spain is far behind most European countries in the number of her railways and in the quality of her roads. Yet probably enough has been done to render another Peninsular war impossible. Another Wellington could not base his whole system of defence on the extreme slowness with which his separate enemies could communicate, and the impossibility of their keeping vast numbers concentrated. Marshes too have been drained, whereby not only the amount of fertile and habitable land has been increased, but also their importance as a protection or otherwise has disappeared. The fens no longer shut off East Anglia from central England. The vast region of the Pinsk marshes protected a great part of Russia in 1812; if a new Napoleon invaded Russia now, he would not have his operations limited to a portion of the western frontier. The clearing of forests has affected the conservation of moisture, and thereby fertility, in many regions. The construction of harbour works, besides assisting commerce, has modified the geographical conditions under which maritime war is waged. The Kiel canal increased the naval strength of Germany, by rendering it possible to move ships securely between the Baltic and the North Sea, instead of their being

compelled to make the circuit of Jutland, and pass through the Sound, open to attack. The cutting of the isthmus of Suez has almost revolutionized one-half of ocean commerce, and has modified profoundly many political conditions which depend on geographical facts. But for the Suez canal, England might, in view of the great improvement in speed of ocean voyages, have been content with the Cape route to India for all purposes except passenger traffic. As it is, she has been compelled to retain an interest in Egypt; and the whole balance of power in the Mediterranean, the geographical conditions affecting warfare in that region, are deeply affected thereby. Analogous results obviously follow from the cutting of the isthmus of Panama, since the Americans have completed the canal long ago projected.

One other such scheme, the construction of a tunnel under the Straits of Dover, will open the possibility of enormous political consequences, if it be ever carried into effect. Many have held it scarcely conceivable that England should barter her insular security for any such advantages as a tunnel might afford,[1] though these were brought vividly into view by the events of 1914 and after.

Some few of these works, such as the St. Gotthard tunnel and the Suez canal, do really curtail distances to be traversed, but most of them only facilitate locomotion of various kinds. It is only metaphorically that the world is made smaller by the vastly increased speed of communication due to steam, and to the rapid improvement in machinery which has taken place of late years. For practical purposes, however, the metaphor holds good, and most conspicuously of all in war. When Napoleon came back from Elba, and the European powers, assembled in congress at Vienna, agreed that each should send its contingent for combined hostilities against him, all of them had troops more or less completely ready for war, and no great delay was expected in setting them in

[1] The author in earlier editions showed his preference for this view. [Ed.]

motion. Nevertheless it was calculated that no Russian forces could appear on the frontier of France until at least three months had elapsed, which was perfectly reasonable, considering the distance. From the Niemen to the nearest point of French soil is about 900 miles in a direct line, and the Russians would necessarily have had a much greater average distance to traverse, marching every step of the way. Now an army that keeps up for a long time an average of ten miles a day does extremely well; it marches of course nearly half as much again on an ordinary day, but there must be many days of rest, of waiting for supplies, of delays through weather and other accidents, interposed in a march lasting for months. All this is completely changed by the introduction of railways. When it is recalled how rapidly Germany swung forces between the eastern and western fronts in the Great War, no further words are necessary to point out how enormously this increase in speed of locomotion affects all military calculations.

The same influences work for peace, and for human happiness generally, even while they visibly render possible war on an ever larger scale. Facilities for transport of goods render nations more habitually dependent on one another, and they should therefore, after the lessons of recent years, be less willing to proceed to extremities in case of a quarrel. Similarly they diminish the chances of suffering through famine and analogous calamities. The easier and quicker the task of conveying food to a district whose own supplies have failed, the less likely it is that the failure will be cruelly felt. The sooner assistance can be sent when a great inundation has occurred, the fewer will be the victims. It is not to be denied that there are drawbacks to all these facilities, but on the whole the balance of advantage is much in favour of them.

Much the same considerations apply to the still more rapid transmission of information by means of the telegraph.

Of its value and usefulness in time of peace nothing need be said; but on the other hand it renders possible most of the gambling which accompanies international trade. It may however be worth while to point out the essential difference it makes in the conduct of war. In former times the commander-in-chief in an extensive theatre of operations could only calculate—he could never know—the exact state of things. Reports from a distant corps took perhaps twenty-four hours to arrive; orders based on them required the same time for delivery. In the interval the enemy's movements might have changed the whole face of events. By the aid of the telegraph a general can now know exactly where each of his subordinates is, and all that they know at the moment, and can transmit his orders instantaneously; an accuracy of combined movements is now fairly easy which was literally impossible without the telegraph. The precision of Von Moltke's strategy in 1870 is most justly admired, but he had at his command an instrument which no other commander had ever wielded. The general effect of this, as of most such advances in the machinery of civilization, is to strengthen the strong, and diminish the chances of the weaker side, though not quite uniformly. Napoleon's brilliant defence when the Allies invaded France in 1814 was based on the fact that they were advancing in two widely separated masses, while he occupied a central position, and could therefore strike at them alternately. In this way his very inferior forces were made effectual to keep his enemies at bay for some time; and the advantage of 'interior lines' which he possessed is obviously indestructible, being founded on mathematical principles. It is however certain that Napoleon's resistance could have been much more rapidly crushed if Blücher and Schwarzenberg had been in instantaneous communication with one another, instead of a day or two apart. To these considerations must be added the new powers of observation, as well as of offence,

conferred upon military leaders by the use of the aeroplane and airship.

It would, perhaps, be too much to say that these results of human action in modifying geography are an unmixed good; but at any rate they are all the work of advancing civilization and greater efficiency of human labour. Instances of an opposite kind are not far to seek. Asia Minor once had many rich and flourishing cities in the coast regions, and much prosperity inland: and Syria was in somewhat the same condition. Since the Seljuk Turks overran western Asia, all this prosperity has disappeared. Cyprus, formerly a garden, has shared the same fate. The northern coast of Africa once contained a great seat of empire, and afterwards furnished vast quantities of corn to feed Rome under the Caesars. Its devastation was begun by the Vandals, carried on by the Arabs, and the mischief has only partially been repaired within the spheres of French and Italian control. Another Carthage is under present conditions impossible.

Real as are all these modes in which human action has modified the influence of geography, they are obviously but trifles in comparison with the natural forces which they to a slight extent counteract. The Alps have lost their mystery, but they still form a barrier which must be crossed: they affect the convenience of every traveller, the cost of every parcel of goods, conveyed into or out of the basin of the Po. Civilized enterprise may seek out new localities in which valuable products can be made to grow; but the steady working of the great natural forces still determines climate, with all its boundless effects on human history. Man may drain and plant, redeeming a little space here and there from barrenness or from malaria: but all he has done or ever can do is infinitesimal beside the influence of the North Atlantic drift, which is only one fraction of the world's system of ocean currents.

CHAPTER III

FRONTIERS

[The author does not observe a distinction, which has come recently into fairly common use, between the frontier as a zone and the boundary as the line within it.—Ed.]

The nature of its frontiers has so important an influence on the history of a state that it is worth while to discuss separately the different kinds of frontier.

Of sea-coasts very little need be said: they admit of no variations and present no problems. They give a people some opportunity, greater or less according to the number and character of the harbours, of becoming maritime and commercial. Races differ immensely as to the extent to which they utilize such opportunities, but at the least there will always be fishing and coasting trade, rendering one section of the population hardy and daring.

Of land frontiers, those which geography would select are mountain chains and other natural features interposing a serious barrier to intercourse. In the ages when tribes were migratory, either before the earth was peopled, or when successive waves followed each upon its predecessor, the new-comers seeking to destroy or dispossess the prior inhabitants, these mountain chains determined the direction of their movements. Kindred tribes that went one to the right, another to the left, of such an obstacle, had their destinies permanently affected by the choice. When they became stationary, the barrier still operated to keep them apart. Such frontiers are formed in Europe by the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Carpathians, and in a lesser degree by other mountain chains. In process of time mankind settled

down to permanent occupation of territory; and then the mountains, which had been obstacles dividing races, tended to become permanent frontiers. Circumstances might and did occur which left the same people in possession on both sides of a mountain chain, but the more obviously natural thing was that its crest should form the actual boundary line. Historically it becomes of real importance whether this is the case or not, and also, if it is so, what is the character of the mountain chain.

Whatever their size or formation, mountains necessarily constitute an impediment to peaceful intercourse. Travelling across them without the aid of good roads is laborious, possibly dangerous. Even the excellent roads which now traverse the Alpine passes, even the tunnels which pierce some of them, only suffice to diminish the trouble and expense. Military expeditions across a mountain range, if the summit ridge be not the frontier line held by the enemy, involve no more than a vast accumulation of ordinary traffic. For all purposes mountain roads cost more time to traverse than an equal distance of level ground; and if, as is probable in war, the whole has to be conveyed by one or two roads, the delay involved will be considerable. Thus if *A* and *B* be two contiguous states, separated by a mountain chain, and *A* holds the reverse slope of the mountains down to the open country, *A* will necessarily have the disadvantage, in invading *B*, of transporting all supplies across an obstacle; and if the army be compelled to retreat, the risk of disaster before it can recross the mountains will be greater than if no such obstacle existed. These, however, are but small drawbacks to set against immense advantages. *A* is perfectly secure against invasion by *B*, originally or as a counter-stroke; *A*'s armies can be massed behind the mountain screen, and can be conveyed to the other side without committing an act of war. *B* is in permanent danger of invasion, should there be unfriendly relations

between the two powers, and can take no specific steps to ward off attack short of actual hostilities. The exact converse would of course hold good, if *B* held *A*'s slope of the intervening chain, assuming that the geography were alike on both sides. As a matter of fact, however, this is rarely the case; mountains are generally steeper on one side than on the other; the level of the plain country on each side may not be the same; the valleys which descend from them will be longer or shorter according to these conditions. The chain may or may not be fairly straight; if it is curved, the lateral valleys will probably converge on the concave side. The ridges which separate the lateral valleys may be straight or curved, low enough to permit of easy lateral communication across them, or high enough to isolate each valley. No two mountain chains are alike in these respects: what is true of one, as to the modes in which military operations can be conducted across it, holds good of another only in the most general way, not in detail.

A single instance will make this abundantly clear. The frontier between France and Italy runs along the crest of the western Alps, with some insignificant variations in detail. The distance across, from fairly open country on one side to similar country on the other, is from forty to sixty miles according to the route chosen, and there are several available. Only a portion of this distance is more laborious to traverse than ordinary country not absolutely level. The existence of the Mont Cenis tunnel moreover would greatly facilitate transport by one of the alternative routes. Thus if either France or Italy held the exits of the passes on the other side of the Alps, it could prepare an attack on its neighbour with no drawback except that of having some thirty or forty miles of the line or lines by which its forces are moved and supplied more difficult than the average. This drawback is trifling compared to the advantage of being perfectly secure against a counter-stroke.

The geography of the region, however, would make it an enormously greater gain for France to hold the eastern slopes of the Alps than for Italy to hold the western. All the routes into Italy, as the map shows, converge more or less on Turin. French invading forces could therefore be conveyed into Italy by various routes, and would have the maximum of facility for concentrating and co-operating beyond the mountains. The converse would obviously be the case if Italian armies invaded France. The results of this geographical formation can no doubt be put the other way. The Italians would know for certain that they must station their defending army somewhere near Turin: the French would have to wait until they learned by what route or routes the invasion was coming. This, however, with the modern facilities for transmitting information and for moving by rail, would be but a trifling disadvantage to France, compared with the Italians' difficulty of getting the sections of their invading force into communication with each other, or the alternative course of using a single route.

It is a standing menace to the peace of the world, if a nation which is permanently stronger than its neighbour, and is aggressive in its policy, happens to possess also this advantage of holding the reverse slope of the mountains which lie between them. Apart from this, however, on general principles of equity, it is desirable that the natural frontier, which the crest of a mountain chain supplies, should be adopted politically. The conformation may be more advantageous to one side or the other in case of hostilities: one or the other may find it necessary, or deem it worth while, to protect itself by artificial fortifications. Again, changes in the art of war, and other incidents of material progress, such as the construction of roads and railways, alter the conditions from age to age. All these are however matters of detail, more or

less important according to circumstances. They do not affect the general principle, which clearly pronounces no mountain frontier fair to both sides, which does not at least approximately follow the crest. Geographical theory is on this point in perfect accord with the permanent interests of mankind.

What has been said so far about mountain frontiers proceeds, as will be seen, on the tacit assumption that the chain is one like the Alps, passable with reasonable facility at various points, though by no means everywhere. If it is practically impassable no question arises ; the amount of influence that could be exerted on a campaign by the small handful of men who might cross a really lofty chain, such, for instance, as the portion of the Alps between the Great St. Bernard and the Simplon, is a *quantité négligeable*. So too the amount of peaceful traffic across such a chain may be ignored : here and there under special circumstances there will be a little, but it is not worth reckoning in the total of national trade.

There are, however, other types of mountain chains besides the Alps, though people in general are apt to be entirely ignorant both of the facts and of the inferences to which they lead. Some are not single ranges at all, at least for practical purposes. A single line of watershed may no doubt always be traced : but the lateral valleys are extremely long, or run nearly parallel to the axis of the chain, so that the ridges separating them have to be crossed. From the point of view of human passage, peaceful or military, they become wide strips of mountain land. The difficulties inherent in crossing any mountains are indefinitely prolonged, and therefore rendered much harder to overcome. Again, the greater the height above sea level, the greater on the average will the strictly physical obstacles be, though exceptions may be found. The greater also will be the climatic difficulties, such as the effects of

cold on travellers, and the total blocking of routes during a part of the year by snow. On the other hand, mountain regions of less elevation would be inhabited: and if the inhabitants resist the passage of an army, they have opportunities not merely in proportion to the distance to be traversed, but in an increasing ratio. If it requires a given number of men to guard the route of an army across a mountain chain twenty-five miles wide from plain to plain, it would probably take eight or ten times as many to hold 100 miles.

It follows that when a belt of mountain country is very wide it may operate, as a frontier, very much as if it were extremely high. Communication may be so difficult as to render it virtually impossible to conduct a military expedition across it, at any rate if that expedition is to be permanently supported from the other side of the mountains. Artificial means may of course be used to diminish the difficulties. Properly-made roads, or in modern days railways, greatly accelerate the pace at which the passage can be made, and so render the barrier no longer one of a prohibitive character. Hill tribes may be disarmed, or possibly reduced to willing obedience, in which case the frontier of the power which has accomplished the task is to all intents and purposes pushed forward to the farther side of the mountains. The physical difficulties however still remain: it becomes a question in each case whether they are sufficiently great to render it imprudent to hold an outlet on the farther side, in face of a possible enemy. The Suleiman mountains, on the north-western frontier of India, afford an illustration. During a great part of their length they are high enough, and the mountain belt wide enough, to form a real barrier—not impassable indeed, but practically sufficient. And though there are two well-known passes through them, yet neither of these comes into the same category as the Alpine passes. The Bolan by its length, and by the waterless character of

most of the region traversed, is a natural obstacle of a very serious kind; and the Khaibar, though physically easier, passes through a wide belt of country inhabited by warlike hill tribes, passionately hostile to foreign intrusion. Of this frontier more will be said in a later chapter, and especially of the Khaibar pass, which has been in all ages the main route out of central Asia into India.

There is yet another type of mountain frontier that is no protection at all, but rather an embarrassment—a chain of hills which can be crossed practically anywhere, so far as physical difficulties are concerned. Of course a sort of natural selection operates in such cases. Roads are made over the passes which afford the easiest gradients, or in the directions which most conveniently connect important places. Then the other routes are neglected, and with good reason: for a made road makes a vast difference in the facilities of wheeled trafic. In war, especially, heavy vehicles for transport, which are essential under modern conditions, practically must have roads: it pays better to wait while a road is cut than to attempt to convey them without one. Nevertheless, the natural passes can be used for the passage of actual troops of all kinds, and for such supplies as are necessary for a short time, provided that they are conveyed by pack animals or light vehicles. Over such a frontier invasion can be made anywhere: the only limitation on the invader's choice is that he must so plan his movements as to seize without much delay one or more of the routes provided with good roads. The enemy may watch all points, but he cannot guard all adequately: he must resign himself to being invaded as easily as if the frontier were an artificial line. Indeed, he is hampered by the fact that troops posted to guard any pass that is not attacked must retreat, perhaps a long distance, down the lateral valley leading to it, and run the risk of being cut off while thus isolated. On the same principle as before, such a chain of

hills is an obviously reasonable and convenient line to adopt as a frontier, from the point of view of present expediency. It is of course not so likely to be a real dividing line between races and languages as a less accessible range. That is to say, its natural tendency to serve as a barrier in the beginnings of human history is more likely to have been obliterated, in the course of time, by the many causes which tend to overrule the dictates of geography.

Another natural feature which in the modern world has come into considerable use as a frontier between states is a river. Historically, or rather pre-historically, when mankind were in the migratory stage, rivers served the opposite purpose. They served as guides for moving tribes, leading them in the direction where there were least obstacles to their advance, to regions which were probably level and fertile. They were convenient highways: it is obviously easier to convey heavy loads in a boat than by beasts of burden. Thus also they facilitated intercourse between opposite banks, so that as a general rule both sides of a river were peopled by the same race, instead of its being a barrier keeping alien races apart. Instances are too numerous to quote; the best illustration perhaps is furnished by the Danube. Its whole upper basin is occupied by Germans, though not politically one, down to where it passes between the extremity of the Carpathians and the easternmost spur of the Alps: and the political frontier between Germany and Austria crosses the Danube, nowhere running along it. Again, its middle basin, from Bratislava to Orsova, is inhabited in great part by Slavs, though Magyars form the dominant element in one portion of it, and the mixture of peoples in this plain is marked. Only at the lower end of its course do we find people of different race on its opposite banks.

For reasons of convenience streams large and small were no doubt used from the first as boundary lines for property,

between the lands occupied by two adjacent tribes or families. As soon as ownership began, means of marking boundaries were required, in order to avoid quarrels between neighbours. And some of these might in time, through conquests or migrations, through the gradual formation of aggregated political units among peoples of the same stock (as can be traced in several countries), have become political boundaries also. This process would of course tend to obliterate the earlier influence of rivers as common highways: but it was not till large kingdoms had been formed that rivers were deemed natural frontiers.

When modern history began, wars were waged mainly for the personal or dynastic ambition of sovereigns, and no account whatever was taken of the feelings of their people. After a successful war the victor annexed territory, whatever under the circumstances the vanquished would cede. If it was the whole of a province, as for instance when Louis XIV compelled Spain to cede Franche Comté, existing boundaries merely changed their significance. If, as was more commonly the case, conquest was done piecemeal, then the lately contending parties had to select some line of delimitation. It was obviously most convenient to take one marked by something recognizable, natural or possibly artificial: in the absence of accurate surveys nothing else was really feasible. One of the earliest and most famous of such delimitations was made in the treaty of Wedmore in 879, when Alfred agreed that the Danes should retain possession of England north and east of the line formed by the great Roman road of Watling Street.

The development of the modern art of war is largely responsible for rivers becoming frontiers. To cross a river in face of a tolerably equal enemy is not so difficult as it might seem, if the assailant has boats or means of constructing a bridge. He can always distract the attention of the enemy by feints at many points, and sooner or later

seize a passage. And if he has the immediate superiority of strength without which an invasion is a mere raid, he can secure his footing on the further bank by seizing some place possessing a permanent bridge, or by fortifying a *tête de pont* to protect his own military bridges. Even then, however, it is a matter of great delay and some risk transferring all the necessary *impedimenta* of a modern army over a single bridge, or even several laid close together. Invasion across a river of any size is a somewhat more serious task than crossing an artificial line; but experience goes far to prove that the difficulty lies not in the first crossing, but in the subsequent working. There is always here a weak spot in the line of communication of the invading army, not only inviting attack by the enemy, but exposed to natural interruption. When Napoleon marched to Vienna in 1809, he found himself face to face with the Austrians across the Danube, the permanent bridges being destroyed. His first effort to cross by the isle of Lobau, just below Vienna, failed disastrously in spite of the topography being decidedly favourable to his enterprise. This was because, when the Austrians were barely able to hold in check the forces sent to gain a footing on the northern bank, the bridges into Lobau from the southern bank broke down, and Napoleon was unable to send reinforcements. The Danube had risen in flood with the spring melting of the Alpine snows and carried away the bridges. It was not until after several weeks of delay that Napoleon, with all the resources of the Vienna arsenal at his command, could master the Danube. This is rather an exceptional case, but it serves to illustrate the possibilities which a river frontier offers. And since the same is true for both sides, it is obvious that each will have some little protection against the other through adopting the river as a boundary line between them.

The greater and wider the river, the greater is the protection afforded, till ultimately it is a more formidable

obstacle than the sea itself, since vessels for transport cannot in general be so readily accumulated. For instance, it may be doubted whether any army whatever, much less one coming from beyond the Suleiman mountains, could force a passage of the Indus in face of a British army defending India. European rivers are of course on a much smaller scale: they can be crossed, but still they present a real obstacle. So long as motives of military convenience were predominant, they tended to be adopted as frontiers. The modern tendency is towards considering, or at least professing to consider, national affinities in re-settling boundaries. The geographical view that a river is not a natural barrier between races is on the whole well supported by European examples. The Drava, however, provides an exception as between Magyar and Slav. There has, moreover, to be taken into account the natural desire of political states for access, on economic grounds, to the banks of a river which is an international highway, as the Danube is.

Many frontiers are artificial, and cannot appeal to geography as justifying them, or the reverse. Some are artificial in the strictest sense of the word. The boundary line between the United States and Canada, westward from the great lakes, is the 49th parallel of latitude. Similar lines have been adopted in delimiting the African possessions, or spheres of influence, of sundry European powers, and in dividing from one another some of the Australian colonies. Many in Europe have some explanation in topography: this or that portion has been made to run along some stream or chain of hills, or coincides with the limits of some ancient township or feudal domain. This, however, is not enough to give them a geographical *raison d'être*: they exist because it has been so arranged, and there is no more to be said. Even if a frontier as drawn leaves some inhabitants under the government of an alien race, geography will be slow to condemn it. It will, at any

rate, demand evidence that any other line will not involve an equal amount of prima facie injustice. There is always some admixture of races along the line which separates two peoples. Geography may well despair of drawing any frontier that will honestly satisfy ethnology, and must therefore let politics settle the question.

On some frontiers the contiguous nations tend to construct fortresses, by way of strengthening their defence. Where the frontier consists of a mountain chain, the fortresses may with advantage be placed at some distance down, so as to guard the egress from more than one lateral valley, though this is by no means always possible. This of course does not preclude fortifications on a small scale on or close to the frontier line, but these will be merely subsidiary, for a reason already suggested—the impossibility of defending the whole of a long line, while the enemy can choose his points of attack. Where the frontier is open, the exact position of a fortress will be determined by a variety of considerations, of which the topographical conditions are the most obvious. In modern times the importance of enclosing in a fortress a great railway junction would probably be deemed paramount, especially as with the long range of modern artillery a large area must be included within the fortified ring. All however are meant to serve a double purpose, directly to stop the invaders on one or more routes, and to threaten his flank if he advances by others, thereby compelling him to detach a force in order to besiege or blockade the place.

Fortifications destined to protect an artificial frontier will of course vary considerably, according to the topographical conditions, and little need be said of them as involving geographical principles. There are however distinct types of frontier defences, and the methods adopted by France and Germany down to 1914 to defend the line of their common frontier may aptly serve as an illustration. Both

had the same end in view, to render an attack as dangerous as possible to the enemy, but they set about it in very dissimilar ways. The length was about 200 miles: of this one-quarter lay along the crest of the Vosges mountains, a perfectly definite geographical feature, though passable in many places: the rest was altogether arbitrary, so far as physical conformation goes.

The French fortified the whole line, not of course on the actual boundary, but a little way behind it: they claimed to be able to cross the fire of heavy guns at any point, except where they deliberately left a gap north of Épinal. Such a barrier, it was assumed, could only be pierced by a direct attack in front, since it could not be turned without entering on Belgian territory to the north or Swiss to the south, both of which states were permanently neutral. The French theory was that a direct attack would inevitably fail, in view of the modern improvements in the art of destruction: at any rate it would involve enormous losses, such as no army could be expected to face. The weak point of it was that a very great number of troops would be required to man a line 200 miles long, opposite any point of which the enemy could accumulate vast forces. A successful attack would obviously make a disastrous breach in the front line; could the French have sufficient forces in their second line to prevent this disaster from being overwhelming? The opinion of most critics, at the time when the French defences were planned, was that the Germans could certainly succeed if they were willing to face the heavy cost of the first assault. Nearly the whole of the French active army would have been needed adequately to man the lines; and as such an attack would necessarily take place, if at all, at the outbreak of hostilities, their reserves could not yet be in the field. When these theories were put on trial in 1914, the Germans rendered them nugatory in part by shirking the menace of the direct attack and violating the neutrality of Belgium; the French, despite their tenacity,

needed the assistance of Britain, and ultimately of other allies, in a measure which few if any could have foreseen, and in the north the defensive line settled down upon terrain which dictated new theories. But in the south the old ones held good as the fortress of Verdun withstood all onslaughts.

The Germans had planned their defences on a totally different principle. They possessed two fortresses, Metz and Strasbourg, which had in past ages frequently been bones of contention between France and Germany. Metz is some thirty miles from the northern or Belgian end of the frontier line, Strasbourg is about halfway from Metz to the southern or Swiss end. Each of these was able to receive within the outer ring of its fortifications an almost unlimited number of troops. The railways run eastwards from both, connected at a considerable distance back from the frontier. By these great masses of men could be concentrated in either or both, or shifted from one to the other. The French were liable to an attack in great force out of either, with little chance of ascertaining from which quarter it would come. If the French tried to invade, they could not move forward a step without placing before both Strasbourg and Metz armies sufficient to hold in check any German force that might possibly issue from them. Otherwise, not only might a counter-invasion be attempted, but also they could be attacked in flank and rear as soon as they had advanced a short distance. Forces large enough to mask effectually Metz and Strasbourg would make so great a deduction from the French active army that there would be little left for a forward move at the outbreak of hostilities. If then the French must remain on the defensive till some at least of their reserves were ready for the field, the Germans had time to strike the first blow. Such was the general theory, setting aside what has already been mentioned, the German attack through Belgium.

The difference of principle between the two defensive systems is obvious. The French supposed themselves to

have rendered impossible any but a direct frontal attack, except an advance into the gap between Épinal and Toul which would be at least equally hazardous; and they believed that against such their line was impregnable. The Germans had only two points where invasion was impossible; they said in effect to the enemy—advance if you dare, for you cannot ward off the blows we shall deliver against your flank.

It will have appeared very plainly that the nature of a country's frontier must exercise a perpetual influence on its wars—influence in detail, if the phrase may be allowed. At certain points it is open to attack, at others it is practically safe, although the Great War, even if it had furnished no other example, would have proved the extent to which modern science applied to warfare could overcome natural barriers in the operations on the Austro-Italian front, and in the invasion of Syria from Egypt across the intervening desert. Conversely, a nation can assume the offensive, if desirous to do so, in some directions much more advantageously than in others. Certain places are important strategical points, and are sure to figure in any war. Frontiers, however, may exercise an influence on a much larger scale, permanently affecting for good or for evil a nation's destinies. The protection afforded by the sea is obvious and continual, as are the opportunities it gives for commerce. The nature and limits of sea-power are however better discussed separately. It is almost equally obvious that a country like Spain, with a single short land frontier, marked off by a mountain chain, is thereby greatly isolated, unless it makes good use of its sea-coasts. That Spain has fallen behind in the race of material progress is doubtless largely due to the character of her people: but their decline in energy, both industrial and intellectual, has been assisted by the geographical conditions.

On the other hand, a nation that has open frontiers,

having no geographical protection against attack by its neighbours, can only become great if it possesses ample military strength. That is to say, it must permanently devote to military service a larger proportion of its manhood than a nation less exposed. This doubtless works for good in some degree: the people are forced to cultivate energy and self-reliance, to recognize the duty of making great sacrifices in the cause of patriotism, or they may cease to be a nation. It works however also for evil, possibly even more: industrial progress is of course retarded by a disproportionate amount of the population being withdrawn from peaceful labour. More important still, it gives occasion for the growth of what we have of late learned to call militarism. The king has good ground for saying, as the whole policy of the earlier kings of Prussia in effect said—unless you obey me implicitly as soldiers obey, I cannot undertake that we shall hold our own, much less that we shall improve our position. Such a government, frankly despotic, may be successful externally, but internally it tends to make the military spirit tyrannically predominant, and thus to depress all peaceful pursuits. It is of course possible, as Prussia has shown, for a nation so situated to turn its energies towards the arts of peace, during a period when its military strength was fully established. And it should do so all the more vigorously because its energies have been well drilled, though in some respects with considerably less success than if these energies had been more spontaneously developed. Militarism however is by no means a matter solely of frontiers. All that one has a right to say is that Prussia, for instance, could never have risen above a petty state unless she had become thoroughly military, and that for this growth a heavy price has been paid.

All that has been said so far has been on the tacit assumption that frontiers separate two civilized powers, and therefore are exactly ascertained, and also involve the same considera-

tions on both sides. The case is necessarily different when the frontier has a civilized state on one side only. Even if the line is definitely marked, uncivilized people are apt not to respect it, and so to compel the neighbour state to violate it also, in discharge of the paramount duty of protecting its own subjects. The civilized power may be ambitious and aggressive, ready to seize every opportunity of extending its territory or its influence. And even if it has no such inclination, circumstances may arise, as history has often shown, which almost compel an advance. This may or may not be prudent, and if a mountain frontier is involved geography may have much to say on the point: but expanding powers usually take the risk, and after all geography furnishes only a part of the data for decision. The best illustration available is on the north-west frontier of India, but this will be discussed in the chapter dealing with India as a whole.

CHAPTER IV

TOWNS

As soon as men had reached the agricultural stage, which involves permanent habitations, and some accumulation of property, they began to feel the need of protection against enemies, and therefore to form towns. As nomads, they may or may not have been accustomed to dwell together in communities larger than a single family. They may or may not have learned to surround their temporary camping places with ditches or mounds, by way of safeguarding their cattle. At any rate, they early chose sites for their towns which were easily capable of defence—hill tops, so that an enemy might have to ascend a slope exposed to their missiles before reaching the base of their rude wall of earth or loose stones—peninsulas nearly surrounded by the loop of some river, so that the neck alone required defence, or possibly both in one. Instances of towns which had their origin in such hill-forts might be quoted by the hundred. That London was one of them is indicated by its name, one of the elements in which is the Celtic *dun*, a hill-fort; otherwise it is difficult, as must be confessed, to discern the nucleus of rising ground from which London has extended itself over many square miles. More obvious instances are given by smaller cities, such as Lincoln, Carcassonne, Nuremberg, Sion, Stirling. Sites more or less thoroughly enclosed by a river are occupied by Durham, Berne, Toledo,

all of which have the double advantage of being also on high ground. Rome is remarkable, though not unique, as a specimen of a town which has grown out of the union of two or more such hill-forts in close proximity to each other.

Next probably in order of time come settlements which were more or less commercial in their origin, situated at some ford, or at a later date a bridge, or at the outlet of a defile, or where two tracks crossed each other. By such places must pass the few travellers of early times, and it was naturally convenient for all parties that goods should be there exchanged. Of these again the number is very large. Oxford, Hereford, Utrecht, carry in their names the suggestion that they owe their origin to being convenient spots for crossing rivers. Others again are situated where two rivers meet, such as Paris, Lyons, Mainz. Of others it may be surmised, or it is known, that they stand where a very ancient bridge was built, or a trade route crossed a river, or where two trade routes met. Of towns growing up at the outlet of a defile, perhaps the most conspicuous instances are Carlisle, Dresden, and Verona.

Fishing villages on the sea-shore, with or without the further advantage of a defensible position, would arise at a very early stage in human history. Some of these developed into trading ports, as soon as the art of naval construction was far enough advanced, or into head quarters of sea-rovers. Every bit of sea-coast in Europe shows such settlements: the reasons why one grew important, while its neighbours remained mere villages, are by no means always discernible from the geography; but it may safely be said that a situation capable of defence was of great value in helping a small maritime town to become great. Constantinople, and still more markedly Venice, are cases in point.

Towns at the mouths of navigable rivers tended to be placed as high up them as was feasible, in order to be better protected against enemies coming by sea. This was no

small consideration in times like those depicted in the *Odyssey*, when what we should call piracy was regarded as a natural occupation, inconvenient to peaceful people ashore, but not abhorred as criminal. Of course the distance up a river at which it was possible to establish a port depended on the size of the ships in use. Many a place which had relatively much maritime importance in early ages has been superseded, because its river was too shallow or too tortuous for the larger vessels of more modern times. Bristol, for instance, was once the second city in England, possibly superior in shipping even to London. The obvious reason why it has been outstripped by Glasgow and Liverpool, to take only ports on the western side of the island, is that access to it up the tidal river Avon is for large vessels both difficult and tedious. Naturally the commerce of Bristol is partially carried on in new docks situated where the Avon enters the Severn, but the disadvantage that the city is so far off is irreparable. Cardiff, on the other hand, which is essentially a modern place, owing its importance mainly to steam coal, is on the sea-coast. Bordeaux and Nantes again are ancient towns standing far up the Garonne and the Loire; but the chief Atlantic trade of France is centred in Havre, a town of comparatively recent foundation close to the open sea. Marseilles, the greatest of French ports, all things being taken into account, is also in all probability the most ancient: it has been prosperous for considerably over 2,000 years. Prima facie it would seem to be an exception; but the harbour runs sufficiently far inland for security, at any rate before long-range cannon came into use, while the water is also deep.

As civilization advanced, the towns grew larger and more numerous. The Graeco-Latin peoples, making them political units, developed them to an importance which left the open country a mere appendage of the towns. This apparently did not happen anywhere else, unless we except

the Phoenician trading cities and their offshoots, Tyre, Carthage, Cadiz. These latter, it may be observed, being entirely maritime, tended to select sites open to the sea and easily defensible on the land side—an island closing a harbour, or a tongue of land enclosed between the sea and a lagoon not completely land-locked. Cadiz stands to this day a type of such city sites, though Tyre and Carthage are things of the past.

Increase in the size of towns rendered many of the early hill sites inconveniently small. In some cases the town grew outside the original limits, and was sooner or later enclosed by a fresh wall. Rome may be taken to have reached this stage when the wall of Servius was built. It was apparently due to extension of this kind that so many ancient towns have within them streets far too steep for convenience, sometimes even too steep for any wheeled vehicles. If the buildings are not themselves ancient, they have merely replaced older ones: these are sure to be the localities which have been longest occupied. In other places a new town grew up on more level ground, the hill top being crowned by a castle, from which the feudal chief lorded it over his vassals below. A more extreme case is furnished by Old Sarum, which was deserted in favour of the present Salisbury, some miles off. Lack of water, if not actually the determining cause of this movement, renders the original site, though excellent for defence, unfit for anything beyond a very small population. The most singular instance is perhaps Carcassonne. This town had already had a long history at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and was then surrounded by elaborate walls which, aided by its highly defensible situation, enabled it to stand a long siege in the Albigensian war. A generation or two later fresh walls were built, enclosing more ground down the slopes of the hill. Since then the old town has been almost entirely deserted, and a new

Carcassonne has grown up on the plain below, which derives no slight advantage from the travellers who come to see the ancient walls.

As population increased, and mankind became thoroughly stationary, sites less favourable than those originally selected came to be occupied by newer towns. With the development of skill in building, it became possible to protect effectually towns that had no naturally defensible position. New towns, that could from the first be surrounded by effective walls, might grow up in any locality that possessed other advantages. A rough method of natural selection naturally determined which of them should become important, and which should not. Geographical conditions, such as the proximity of a navigable river to facilitate trade, were obvious factors in such selection, but doubtless were not the only ones. It is plainly impossible to determine in each case, or even in many cases, what influences have actually resulted in making a town great, or keeping it small. All that geography can do is to point out generally the conditions which tell for or against their chances of growing to importance.

Defensibility was an essential condition, down to the close of the Middle Ages, for the prosperity of all towns, whether they were more or less autonomous city republics, or the head quarters of some feudal chief. In modern history, which from the geographical point of view may be taken to start from the consolidation of nations on the ruins of feudalism, the state of things is vitally altered. Most towns need no defences at all: the ancient walls are levelled, and the distinction between town and suburbs vanishes, generally much to the sanitary advantage of the population, though with a loss of picturesqueness. Other towns become fortresses first, centres of population only secondarily: industrial advantage is deliberately postponed to the one consideration of making them effective elements

of national defence. In the present day this means little; with the immensely increased range of artillery, a place is fortified by means of outlying works, distant some miles from its centre. Thus probably the only inconvenience suffered is that railways are not allowed to pass through a town like Metz: trains come in and out again by the same line. Before this change took place, the industries of Lille and Liège, for instance, now important, must have been grievously cramped by the fortifications.

Of modern fortresses some have, so to speak, been selected by geography, others arbitrarily. Belfort, for instance, in the gap between the Jura and the Vosges, is a place pointed out by nature for a fortress, if such things are to exist at all. Since French ambition has realized its great aspiration, and France again extends to the Rhine, Belfort must inevitably form part of a second line of defence. While Alsace was German, it was in the front line. Only if an empire like Charlemagne's could be established permanently, would Belfort cease to have any military importance. Rheims, on the other hand, was made a fortress arbitrarily, though with good reason. It was thought right to fortify some place in that region, for the second line of defence; and Rheims, as a large town and considerable railway centre, was preferred to less important places. The majority of European fortresses, however, do not exactly belong to either of these classes. Given the existing frontiers, which are partly the outcome of the movements of peoples in remote ages, though partly dictated by geography—given also that certain towns have grown important, which again is only partly due to geography—the places suitable for fortresses are obvious. Strassburg, Mainz, Cologne, along the course of the Rhine, are familiar examples.

One class of towns is essentially a product of advanced civilization, namely health resorts. These are of two sorts,

those possessing mineral springs that are found to heal disease, and those which have merely advantages of climate and scenery. Some few of the former are very ancient, notably Bath and Aachen, both of which date from Roman times, if not earlier. Of the latter class it would be difficult to cite one fair specimen that is ancient and still surviving. Roman luxury frequented the sea-side, but the only place which can safely be said to have owed its origin to the practice is Baiae, which has perished. The vast majority of such towns are of very modern growth. Health resorts have also tended, for reasons easily discernible, to be also pleasure resorts, and the secondary purpose of their existence has often superseded the primary one. In the modern world they grow apace, wherever fashion dictates or skilful speculation sees its opportunity, until in some countries the *Fremden-industrie*, as the Swiss call it, becomes a recognized source of national wealth.

The industrial town is a thing essentially modern. So long as weaving and other similar industries were worked by hand, they could be carried on anywhere: there was no advantage in the workers congregating together. With the introduction of machinery, which was largely dependent for its effectiveness on steam-power, this again necessitating the use of coal, all was changed. Machines could only be used for manufactures on a large scale. Coal was necessarily cheapest in the localities where it was dug. Thus manufacturing towns grew up on the coal-fields, and especially in those places where coal was found in proximity to iron, the other indispensable and bulky requisite for manufactures. The sites where vast populations have accumulated—populations moreover having definite economic interests, and therefore important factors in politics—were thus inexorably fixed by geography. It is conceivable that the considerations which determine where manufacturing populations shall congregate may be greatly altered

if electricity becomes the chief motive-power. Electric force is transmissible, and if the cost of transmission can be kept within fairly narrow limits it may be feasible to generate it on the coal-fields, and utilize it at a distance. Similar use is made of water-power in several centres, such as Scandinavia, North America (around Niagara, &c.), and Mexico, and it is quite possible that this may be done on a much wider scale. In fact, enthusiasts have been found to say that Piedmont, ringed round by a horseshoe of high mountains, is destined to become the workshop of Europe. Without going quite so far as this, one can easily imagine many ways in which the distribution of population might thus be modified, and with it the history of the country.

Many of the cities which were greatest when authentic history was first beginning, have now perished altogether, or at best have shrunk to very small dimensions. Nineveh and Babylon, Tyre and Sidon, the various Persian capitals, Thebes—none of these can be said to exist as towns. Carthage, too, has perished, though the modern town of Tunis adjoins its site. The deliberate policy of conquerors in some instances was directed to prevent the restoration of cities that had been more or less completely destroyed by the chances of war. In other cases political changes, such as the occupation of the country by uncivilized hordes, have left no room for towns to flourish. Possibly superstition has here and there banned the site of a ruined city, or it proved easier to occupy new ground. Geographical reasons more or less completely accounted for their growing up originally, and those reasons in many instances hold good still. Geography however can only recommend a site; if there are not men capable of using it, or if motives good or bad deter those who might have done so, she speaks in vain.

Geography can however account for the abandonment of some towns. Changes in climate or in other natural

conditions may render a place no longer worth inhabiting. Posidonia (Paestum) must once have been a considerable city, if one may judge from the great temples still standing; now it is a malarious desert. Aigues-Mortes was the Mediterranean port of St. Louis, and was in his son's reign thought worth surrounding by walls worthy of Milan. It might have maintained a rivalry with Marseilles, if the action of the sea had further opened its lagoons: as it is, the sea has virtually closed them up, and Aigues-Mortes is like a withered kernel in an imposing shell. Man's neglect and mismanagement have in other places opened the way for the forces of nature to work ruin, which in some instances is irreparable.

Some towns have risen to special pre-eminence as the capitals of states, and these form in some sense a class apart. Most of them possess more or less marked advantages of situation. It would not be easy to select better sites for the capitals of England and France than London and Paris. Madrid is thoroughly central to Spain, though little else can be said in its favour. The reasons why Moscow rather than any other place in the same region should have risen to importance, do not appear on the face of the geography; the Kremlin hill doubtless accounted for its original selection as a site for a town. Vienna was the most obvious centre for the *congeries* of provinces forming the Austrian monarchy, Hungary being left out of account. Lisbon and Copenhagen are undoubtedly the natural capitals of the small and peculiarly constituted states to which they belong.

Other capitals owe their present rank to historical influences or to deliberate choice. Berlin was originally the chief town of a small frontier district. As the markgraves of Brandenburg gradually grew in power and extent of dominion, the fortunes of Berlin rose with theirs, till it became the capital not merely of the kingdom of

Prussia, but of the German empire. Whether Rome is in the best situation for the capital of modern Italy is doubtful; but in view of the ancient traditions of the Roman empire, no other city could possibly be preferred. Constantinople was deliberately selected as a new seat of empire when the whole Mediterranean basin obeyed one master; and the choice was excellent under the political and other conditions then prevailing. It has remained a capital ever since, though its geographical importance has greatly declined. The site of Alexandria, between lake Mareotis and the sea, commended itself to the great conqueror whose name the city bears, and time has amply justified his choice. Petrograd was built by the founder of the greatness of Russia, in order to bring the nation into nearer connexion with the sea and with the civilization of western Europe. The wisdom of Peter the Great's step might be criticized: but whatever its success, Petrograd has by no means extinguished the ancient importance of Moscow.

It is the exception, rather than the rule, that a capital should be also a really important place for manufactures. Even in London, great as are its industries, the other interests centred there suffice to relegate the manufacturing element to the background. The same holds good in a still greater degree of Paris, and there is scarcely another capital of which the manufactures are worth taking into account. All capitals however illustrate the saying that nothing succeeds like success. When a town has been made the seat of government, it has every chance of becoming also the centre of national life. Because some classes frequent the capital, others are led to do so also. Roads and railways converge to it; those forms of commerce and finance which have the widest range of business are almost compelled to seat themselves there, even if it is not a centre of manufactures. National establishments of all kinds, from the head quarters of the army to the chief

public museums, are practically sure to be placed at the capital. Nowhere in Europe is the seat of the government of a country not really among its greatest towns, except in the small state of Holland, where special circumstances led to The Hague becoming the capital. Switzerland is possibly also an exception: Berne is certainly not a more important town than Geneva or Zürich. Switzerland however is a federation, and not homogeneous in race or language: historical reasons well account for Berne becoming the administrative centre. Precisely for the same reason the United States set up a new town, in a district severed for the purpose from the component states of the union, to serve as the seat of government. It is a marked testimony to the power which an administrative capital exerts in attracting population, that Washington, which has no other *raison d'être*, should have grown so large as in fact it is.

A state is obviously likely to suffer if its capital is badly placed. There is no capital in Europe which is dangerously exposed to military attack, at least relatively to the size of the state, unless it be Belgrade. Brussels is of course near the frontier, but a state of the size of Belgium cannot from the nature of the case place its capital out of reach of attack. Several states however have capitals on the sea-coast, which would be at the mercy of an enemy superior at sea. Portugal, for instance, is extremely vulnerable at Lisbon: and the position of Copenhagen has more than once exposed Denmark to attack which proved irresistible. Constantinople is protected by the difficulties of navigation, and on the Mediterranean side by the Dardanelles; otherwise it could hardly have flourished as a capital for so many centuries.

Security against attack is of course not the only consideration. Other advantages may well outweigh a certain amount of exposure. There was no other town in Serbia, and is none in Yugoslavia, which could be thought of as a rival to

Belgrade. Portugal would not gain by shifting her capital away from Lisbon, or Greece from Athens. Security, thorough or comparative, is however a matter of real importance; and states which, like France, do not deem their capitals really safe, naturally fortify them.

Similarly, it is a misfortune if the capital of a country has an unhealthy climate. Neither Italy nor Spain can be said to be well off in this respect; in Spain indeed the climatic disadvantages of Madrid are proverbial. In India the bad climate of Calcutta proved a serious evil, and was a factor for consideration when the capital, in recent years, was shifted to Delhi. As the East India Company drifted into its imperial sway over India, so Calcutta, originally not even the most important of the Company's stations, drifted into being the capital. It was only when the telegraph had been widely extended, and railways diminished the practical importance of distance, that the Indian government ventured to spend much time at Simla, a place which, for all its purer air, would be impossible as a seat of government without these modern appliances.

There is indeed a worse evil than an ill-situated capital, and that is to have none at all. No student of the Middle Ages can have failed to observe that the peripatetic habits of the kings, intelligible as they were under the social and political conditions then prevailing, interfered with orderly government. The fixing of the court of Common Pleas at Westminster, which put an end to all doubt about London being the one capital city of England, was a recognized step in the progress of the English nation. The existence of Paris as a capital for France, while Germany by the operation of various causes had none, is one reason, though certainly not the only one, why the kings of France did, and the kings of Germany did not, succeed in transforming their feudal supremacy over a number of nearly independent vassals into substantial sovereignty.

CHAPTER V

NOMENCLATURE

[I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Canon Isaac Taylor's *Words and Places* for much of the material of this chapter, especially for the etymology of early geographical names. I have not studied the subject at first hand, and I am aware that there is none on which competent judges differ more widely or more obstinately than on etymology. It is quite possible that the weight of expert opinion may be now against one or another of his derivations; but concerning a large number of them there is, I believe, no doubt. Moreover the general principles rest on too many instances to be vitiated by a few of them being deemed inapplicable. His book contains copious lists of the elements, significant in the various languages, that recur in local names. I have made no attempt to reproduce any of this information, except so far as was necessary by way of illustration.]

THERE is another way in which geography and history are closely connected, and that is through nomenclature. It can hardly be said that geographical names influence history, except where occasionally the existence of a name may be used as an argument in favour of some political claim. Names however serve, like other survivals from a long distant past, as materials out of which history may be constructed; and on some points of pre-historic history, if the phrase may be allowed, they furnish almost the only evidence available. Like sites of camps and other relics of human labour, they require to be interpreted with the aid of special knowledge. Like the traces of primitive institutions, they need a wide range of comparison, in order that inferences from them may be sound. Like all fragmentary evidence, they need to be used with caution:

conclusions drawn from them must always be, in some degree, conjectural. If these limitations be kept in view they supply information about early times, as trustworthy as any other source from which knowledge of things pre-historic can be derived. Moreover, they serve to keep in memory more recent events, the facts of which come well within the ken of written history, but might without the aid of nomenclature be more easily forgotten.

Geographical nomenclature, as has been well said, is fossil history. The naturalist traces the stages of animal life on the earth by examination of the fossils imbedded in the successive geological strata. Just in the same way, the succession of races that have inhabited a given country have left traces of themselves behind, in the names of rivers and other natural features, and later of towns. The palaeontologist's materials are, indeed, more abundant and more complete. If some bones or shells of a given species have been worn till they are not certainly recognizable, plenty of others probably are uninjured, and the bulk of them are in no risk of destruction. On the other hand, the extent of the earth's surface is so great that only a fraction of it has been subjected to thorough geological examination. New materials may at any time be unearthed that will serve to extend the knowledge which palaeontology already possesses, or to modify in detail some of its conclusions. The historian has only the existing nomenclature to deal with: nothing, from the nature of the case, can be added. New lights may conceivably be thrown on the etymology of certain names, but there is no probability of this being done on a large scale. Such or such a geographical name is significant in a given tongue, and in no other known language. The inference that it was given by people speaking that language is reasonable, though there is obviously no means of verifying it, in the strict sense of the term 'verification.'

Experience seems to show that geographical names, once given, usually last. They are in the first instance significant, as is natural: arbitrary names are occasionally invented by modern novelists, but even they merely make variations on established types. The first inhabitants—the first, that is to say, of whom we have any cognizance through nomenclature—called a river the 'white water,' for instance, or a hill range the 'blue mountains.' Any particular tribe would have need of but very few such appellations; and as the same process would be going on in many localities, similar names naturally recur. Primitive peoples had no very large supply of words; the number of adjectives available to qualify nouns meaning 'water' or 'stream' was but small. Hence there is a considerable sameness in the signification of river-names throughout Europe, and also of hills and mountains, though in a less degree, for a reason which can be easily discerned. That is to say, the original elements in the names, so far as etymology can trace their meaning, are but few, though the present appellations, having gone through many centuries of phonetic change, seem distinctive enough.

After a time came a new race of conquerors, who subdued the prior inhabitants and made slaves of them. They, having need of names for the things about them, would readily adopt those which they found their slaves using. Then begins the era of 'proper' names, strictly so called—that is to say, of words which have no significance except that of designating an individual. Very possibly the newcomers used the old name as an adjective, and appended it to their own word for 'stream' or 'hill[1].' This, in fact, is

[1] Canon Taylor quotes a very remarkable instance. In the south of Scotland is a hill called *Mountbenjerlaw*. The original name was the Celtic *Ben Yair*, 'head' of the stream better known under the later form of its name, 'Yarrow.' The Angles took the Celtic name as an adjectival prefix to their own word for a hill, *law*. The Norman repeated the process by prefixing *mount* to the Angle name.

nowadays universal: we talk of the river Avon or Wye, indifferent to the fact that those names are merely Celtic words for a stream.

From the nature of the case, names were earliest required for natural features, which are permanent. It was only as men ceased to be migratory that they would find occasion to give names to their own settlements. Only gradually, as population thickened on the ground, would the state of things arise which we now find all over Europe, places of human habitation large or small, from great cities down to isolated farms, planted so close that only a map on a large scale can find room for all the names. In the case of the towns—the word is appropriate to denote all collections of dwellings, since its original meaning is 'enclosure'—the same process went on as with the rivers. The first settlers gave the name, which in all probability lasted, though possibly modified by later comers. Names for large districts were likely to come into existence comparatively late, when population was fairly settled and widespread. Then, and not till then, general names would become useful, and they naturally were derived very largely from the tribes, or *congeries* of tribes, that inhabited them.

These generalizations are sufficiently obvious to need no support from argument. These are the things that might naturally be expected to happen, and in a great many instances evidence is available to prove that they did happen. Nevertheless, it is right to remark that names furnish rather treacherous materials on which to found historical inferences, unless the instances are numerous enough to preclude risk of misinterpretation. There are many possibilities of conclusions based on a few names, if there is nothing else to support them, being mistaken. Names are transformed, often beyond recognition, in the course of time, through phonetic changes in transference from one language to another, through the slow automatic

shifting of pronunciation as generations pass away, through misunderstanding of the original meaning. A couple of instances of the latter will suffice by way of illustration. The Romans called the unconquered inhabitants of northern Britain *Picti*: this accorded well with their habit of staining their bodies, but it was in fact a transliteration of their own name for themselves, which apparently meant 'warriors.' So, again, the Mongolian hordes that threatened to submerge Europe in the thirteenth century were properly called Tatars; but the horror they inspired suggested that they must have come out of Tartarus, and Tartars accordingly they and their kin are called to this day.

Some names were possibly significant in a language now utterly lost, so that the clue to their meaning has perished. Sometimes there are found in two different languages words of almost identical sound, but of very dissimilar meaning, and it therefore becomes doubtful to which of the two the origin of a given name is to be referred. Thus the historian, seeking to decipher the unrecorded past by the aid of etymology, has many more uncertainties to contend with than the naturalist over his fossils. Nevertheless, the indications are sufficiently numerous, and many of them sufficiently certain, to form a very valuable guide, enabling him to discern the scope and order, though not the date or duration, of those great movements of mankind which gradually peopled Europe. And we may be all the more confident in our inferences, when we observe that in America and Australia, which have been freshly peopled within recent centuries, many names seem to have been given, and retained, in much the same fashion.

Nomenclature confirms the view, which has long been regarded as established, that the bulk of the European peoples came in successive waves of migration from the east. First appeared the Celts, the Gaelic branch of them before the Cymric. The Teutons followed the Celts, and

the Slavs came last of all. Nomenclature does not assert, and obviously cannot disprove, the existence of prior inhabitants. It suggests with considerable force the opinion that, if there were such, they either were too low down on the scale to give names to places, or were exterminated by the incoming Celts. Even this inference is subject to possible qualification. There are names of which the significance is doubtful or entirely unknown, and these may be legacies from a pre-Celtic population. Nomenclature also tends to confirm the belief that the Iberians, who were apparently in possession of south-western Europe before the Celts appeared on the scene, came into Europe across the straits of Gibraltar.

Obviously no study of names can give any information as to *race*, if that word be used in relation to physical features, such as colour, and shape of skull. It tells us that most part of Europe was formerly occupied by men who spoke a Celtic language, and there is a reasonable presumption, until positive evidence to the contrary is adduced, that they were also akin physically. But were it actually proved that there never was such a thing as a Celtic race physically speaking, this would in no way shake the conclusion, which is all that nomenclature warrants, that the bulk of the earliest names in Europe are of Celtic origin. This holds good undoubtedly in relation to natural features, and also to the towns of which the importance is ancient, if we include those bearing Latin names. And this we may reasonably do: Greek and Latin are apparently nearer linguistically to the Celtic than to the other members of the great Aryan family of languages.

The names indicating human habitations are very largely Teutonic, in the regions from which the Teutons ousted prior Celtic inhabitants, as for instance in most parts of England. The Celts were thinly spread in the ages when they had much of Europe to themselves; it was only after

the Teutonic immigration that distinct seats of habitation multiplied. And inasmuch as the Teutons were averse to walled towns, preferring small villages, and even separate dwellings each in its own enclosure, the number of names of this class which are of Teutonic origin is extremely large.

Behind the Teutons the Slavs came in, occupying the regions left more or less vacant as the Teutonic tribes poured into the Roman empire. They inherited the names of rivers and mountains, and doubtless of a few towns and villages: but the major part of the latter, in the portions of Europe now Slavonic, may be judged from their names to have been originally of Slav foundation. Nomenclature confirms, and helps to render definite, what history records somewhat vaguely, that the Slavs pushed westwards nearly to the Rhine, in the time between the fall of the Western empire and Charlemagne, but were ousted again by the Teutons.

The indications of nomenclature concur, in general, with what is known, or believed to be known, from other sources. If no written records existed, it would enable us to fix the limits of the Roman empire. Here and there also it shows us facts of which there is no other trace. For instance, the number of Teutonic village names in the portion of France immediately adjoining the straits of Dover is extremely large, indicating a complete occupation of that district by Teutons. Exactly when and how they came there cannot be determined with certainty; but the fact that these names are largely identical with village names on this side of the Channel is certain, and cannot be accidental. At any rate, all Teutons have disappeared from this district, so far as language is a test of race.

Tribal names may for historical purposes be taken as ultimate facts. Their origin naturally is in very remote antiquity, and their meaning, though it can often be con-

jectured, can rarely be said to be certainly known. The names of countries and provinces derived from these tribal names can readily be verified, since they were conferred, or more properly established themselves, within the ages of written history. This very fact makes it easier to exemplify, by means of them, some of those vagaries of nomenclature which compel the historian, who has a due regard for evidence, to treat inferences deduced from nomenclature alone as lacking in certainty.

No power that has ever existed has written on the map so many traces of itself as the Roman empire. They are almost as numerous as the roads and buildings it has bequeathed. Many towns are called after the imperial family titles. Fréjus is Forum Julii, Saragossa is Caesarea Augusta, Augsburg is the germanized form of Augusta Vindelicorum, Aosta is Augusta Praetoria. Many more, conspicuous among them the -casters and -chesters of our own country, tell in their names that they owed their origin to permanent Roman camps. The name of the whole is to be found, as was perhaps natural, in outlying portions. The Seljuk Turks gave the name of Roum to the kingdom which they set up in Asia Minor, after conquering it from the Eastern empire. The very modern kingdom of Roumania owes its name to the settlers on the lower Danube being proud of their connexion with the empire. The only trace of it near head quarters, save the 'eternal city' itself, is the name of Romagna, that clung to the province in Italy which the Eastern emperors retained, after most part of Justinian's conquests had melted away. Yet some names conferred by Rome did not prove indelible. The tribal appellations of the Parisii and Taurini, for instance, appear in the modern Paris and Turin, while Augusta Taurinorum is forgotten and Lutetia survives only in literature. One of the chief Roman administrative centres north of the Alps, Augusta Treverorum, recalls

no longer in its name the greatest period in its history. For once the French form, Trèves, is nearer to the primitive tribe-name than its present German appellation, Trier.

Lombardy and Burgundy are called after the Teutonic tribes that conquered them, but both names now signify something much smaller than the original kingdom. Indeed, what is now known as Burgundy comprises but a very small bit of the kingdom so entitled. The people whom the Romans called Boii had their seat in Bohemia, which has retained its original name, in spite of Slav occupation after the Teutons quitted it to intrude into the empire. Whether the Boii were Teutons, or were Celts conquered later by Teutons who adopted the name, does not seem clear. It appears, however, to be certain that Bavaria—the original form of the name is Boioaria—was so called after the Teuton people who moved from Bohemia into the upper Danube provinces of the empire. Most remarkable of all is perhaps the history of the Frankish name. That powerful people conquered all northern Gaul, while retaining their own German lands. Subsequently, under the Carolingian house, they dominated most part of western Europe. Their name survives in the almost forgotten German region of Franconia, which represents in a vague and partial way their original seat. And it also survives in the modern France, which country no doubt formed part of Charlemagne's empire, though much of it never was entered by the Franks, and the nationality of the whole is entirely alien to the Teutonic. Originally through the reputation of the Frankish empire, more permanently because the French were prominent in the first crusade, the Mohammedans of Syria, and the Levant generally, came to call Europeans *Franks*; and the bastard Italian current in Mediterranean ports obtained the name of *lingua franca*. Perhaps the most curious consequence of the people of Gaul assuming, and nearly monopolizing, the Frank name,

occurred in the fourteenth century. When the direct line of succession from father to son failed, for the first time since the accession of Hugh Capet, the French, very wisely as things turned out, adopted the rule of exclusive male succession to the throne. And they thought proper to justify this by quoting, and rather misapplying, a usage of the Salian Franks, which had no more authority than any principle that might have been culled from the Institutes of Justinian, or any other code of foreign law.

Countries, and the peoples inhabiting them, are by no means universally known by the names which the latter use for themselves. The chief nation of central Europe calls its country Deutschland. We have always employed the name Germany, which has descended from the time of Tacitus. The French call their neighbour Allemagne, after an unimportant Teuton people that settled in and about Alsace in the break-up of the Western empire[1]. Occasionally, names given by foreigners prevail. For instance, all the world knows Wales by the name which the English gave to the region still occupied by the Celts whom they had driven westward, though nothing could be more unlike the native name. The same word reappears in other parts of Europe, and is in fact the common Teutonic appellation for strangers. At more than one point on the frontier of what is ethnically Germany are to be found pairs of contiguous villages, of which one is called Deutsch-, the other Wälsch-. There is, however, a possibility of another interpretation for some of those names, that may serve to illustrate one difficulty mentioned above as tending to render uncertain conclusions derived from nomenclature. The Teutonic *wal*, the root from which come the words of which Welsh is a specimen, and the Celtic *gal*, the

[1] It is a curious commentary on the French claim to the 'natural frontier' of the Rhine that their own special name for Germany should be derived from a tribe whose chief seat was on the left bank.

root of the terms Gael and Gaul, are phonetically interchangeable, according to a well-established principle of philology. Hence it cannot be certain that some of the names which are supposed to be Teutonic appellations for strangers, are not in reality transferences into a Teutonic tongue of their Celtic neighbours' own names for themselves. This, however, can hardly apply to Wales, the Celtic population being Cymric and not Gaelic.

Names given in modern times, since the beginning of the age of discovery, which may be said to date from the voyage of Columbus, follow the same general rules, but with one marked difference. European discoverers in America retained the river names which they found the natives using, such as Mississippi and Ohio, and those of a few conspicuous mountains, such as Popocatepetl. Where European names, such as St. Lawrence, have been adopted, the presumption is that no native name reached the early settlers. To their own settlements the Europeans usually gave names for themselves; but instead of evolving new words, they gave to their new homes names taken from the old country. An American or Australian Stratford, for instance, would not be a place where a street, an old paved Roman road, crossed a river by a ford: it would be deliberately so called in remembrance of the Warwickshire town where Shakespeare was born, or perhaps of some more obscure Stratford.

The early discoverers named many places after themselves or their patrons, or again from some accidental circumstance. Thus the straits of Magellan perpetuate the memory of the first mariner who sailed round the world: the island of Dominica was first sighted on a Sunday. The mode in which the cape of Good Hope obtained its final name is a well-known story. Such instances are perhaps too familiar to be worth quoting, but they serve as records of phases of history that will

therefore be all the less likely to pass into oblivion. A study of the nomenclature of America, or of Australia and the other islands of the southern hemisphere, would almost suffice to reproduce the outline of their history. It tells of the share taken by the various European nations in the earliest discoveries and colonization, and of the preponderance gradually acquired by England. It gives more than a clue to dates of settlement; the names of the states of the American Confederation, which lie along the Atlantic, nearly all record the epoch at which they were colonized. The indigenous names further inland in north America, and in the islands of the Pacific, speak of the European settlers living more or less at peace with the native peoples. The reappearance of famous European names speak occasionally of real or fancied resemblance, as at Venezuela, but are more frequently due to somewhat incongruous fancy, as when the Egyptian Memphis reappeared on the Mississippi. These however have no historical importance.

CHAPTER VI

FALLACIES OF THE MAP

In geography, as in all other departments of human knowledge, men naturally draw inferences from the facts that they have ascertained, or think that they have ascertained. Indeed this is an essential condition of the spread of knowledge: the mistaken conclusions, which in the light of fuller information seem to us absurd, were necessary steps towards the acquisition of that further information. If Columbus had not believed, understanding the sphericity of the earth but immensely misjudging its size, that India lay beyond the Atlantic, he would not have made the voyage that discovered America. It was not, however, until considerable advances had been made towards full geographical knowledge, not until there was some general idea of the modes in which geography affects the destinies of mankind, that there was developed a habit of using geographical facts, and inferences based on them, in the sphere of politics. Such phrases as 'nationality' and 'natural frontiers' are comparatively modern, and could not have become current unless it had been realized that geography was something more than a collection of facts. They have been, and still are, liable to gross misuse; they have been employed as plausible pretences to cover the most unscrupulous ambition, as well as to define reasonable political aspirations. They have served a good purpose in bringing home to mankind the conviction that there are, and ought to be, other motive powers in politics

besides force. And they have been used to delude whole peoples into ideas and aspirations which are at variance with history and common sense. In fact, the misuse of them is far more common than their accurate employment. Arguments based on them almost invariably err in the direction of pressing them too far, of insisting on them as paramount to all other considerations. Thus while they are liable to exert an undue influence over those who are easily carried away by a plausible catchword, they are also liable to be too summarily dismissed by those who detest specious claptrap. It is not reasonable that they should be allowed no hearing because their significance is exaggerated, any more than that they should be given undue weight because of their superficial plausibility. Question-begging phrases, such as those referred to, provoke too emphatic rejection, as well as too ready acquiescence. For both reasons, because such phrases express a real influence exerted on mankind by geography, and also because their misuse is dangerous, it is necessary to form definite conceptions of their meaning.

Bacon, if such ideas could have been prematurely suggested in his age, would have classed them as *idola chartae*, fallacies of the map. The politician who wants an argument to support some aspiration, produces a map coloured to suit his purpose. All districts in which a given language is spoken are tinted alike, regardless perhaps of the fact that in some of them another language is equally current; and the world is asked to draw the conclusion that all ought in justice and fairness to be under the same government. Or a country in which different races live under the same political rule is coloured to show the variety of race, and the world is invited to infer that one or another of them ought in justice to be politically separate from the rest. Or again the map is used to show how extremely convenient certain frontiers would be for a given

nation, and the inference is tacitly drawn that that nation has a moral right to seize them when it can. Such unfair use of deductions from geographical principles is not always wilful even in its origin; it certainly extends to many who know no better, who believe what they are told and have no wish to be dishonest. Still more often, perhaps, the unfairness lies in exaggeration: there is a *substratum* of truth in the plea put forward, but it is given an importance, or pressed to an extent, which is altogether unreasonable.

Few political phrases are more frequently used than 'nationality,' none with more audacious disregard of historical facts on the part of politicians who have an end in view, or more blind credulity on the part of their followers. And yet it is a name for a very real thing, for a sentiment which influences great masses of men for their own sake, and operates powerfully to elicit the sympathy of others. In spite of perversion and exaggeration, it works more for good than for harm, and cannot honestly or wisely be altogether ignored whenever it is invoked. All the more important does it become to form a clear conception of the solid truth that underlies vague talk and unscrupulous ambition.

The word 'nationality' is unfortunately used in a variety of senses, all the more confusing because they are cognate. 'Nation' is properly speaking a political term, denoting the people who are in fact subject to the same government, whatever their divergences of race or language or sentiment. Words may of course be used loosely without much heed to accuracy; but no one speaks deliberately of the Irish nation, or the Bohemian nation, or the Polish nation, without meaning to imply that in his judgement Ireland, or Bohemia, or Poland, has a right to a separate political organization. Nationality is strictly the fact of belonging to a particular nation; a man is said to invoke his nation-

ality, for instance, when being in a foreign land he claims exemption, as a foreigner, from liabilities which attach only to its citizens. It is also used, less accurately, but perhaps conveniently, to express the fact of belonging to a particular race, which may or may not be also a nation. 'I knew his nationality by his accent,' may be said alike of an Englishman in France, and of an Irishman anywhere in the United Kingdom of which Ireland forms a part. The word is however also used, in defiance of grammatical propriety, to mean, like nation, not a fact, but a portion of mankind. A nationality signifies, in modern language, all those people who are in fact united by ties of affinity of some kind, and who are therefore, in their own judgement or in that of the speaker, entitled to aspire after a separate political existence. And it is more or less suggested that it is the business of the civilized world in general to support these aspirations. Where such a sentiment exists, it deserves respect, though not necessarily indulgence at all costs: where it is manufactured or simulated, it deserves severe condemnation as a wanton disturber of peace. The question still remains—and it is here that it intimately concerns geography—on what such a sentiment is founded.

Is nationality a matter of race? No race is unmixed, at any rate in the civilized world. Besides the continual absorption of individual foreigners, there is hardly a section of Europe in which a conquest has not taken place, resulting in a fusion of conquerors and conquered. There have been instances of leaders identifying themselves with a nationality to which they did not by descent belong.

Is nationality a matter of language? However many foreign words a language may annex, its structure remains: it belongs essentially to a particular group of tongues. There may be many more words in an English dictionary of Romance origin than of Teutonic: but English is none the less a Teutonic tongue. Yet a whole people may change its

language, voluntarily or on compulsion. It would be obviously absurd to say that the Norsemen *ipso facto* became French in nationality, when after seizing a portion of the soil of France they adopted its language. A common speech will doubtless assist the fusion of races, and will help to create a sentiment of common nationality, but it is no trustworthy test.

Is physical geography a test? Separate nationalities, so far as sentiment goes, may exist within regions which seem to be marked by physical nature for political unity: peoples that hate each other may be separated by no difference of race, and by the most artificial of frontiers. The truth is that we cannot go behind sentiment: it is a fact which can be more or less accounted for, according to circumstances, but it is not a gospel. Other facts must be weighed also, and may outweigh it when political questions arise involving nationality in its strict sense.

Historical instances may be cited of very diverse import. In some cases the sentiment of nationality is quite genuine, and the claims based on it deserve the sympathy of outsiders. In some it is or has been a sham, artificially suggested in order to find a pretext for an unjust claim. In most, probably, there is some admixture of misrepresentation, ignorant or wilful, with a real and reasonable sentiment.

The national independence of Poland was destroyed by barefaced robbery: nothing could be more natural than that the sentiment of Polish nationality should survive, and involve bitter hatred of the oppressors. And the circumstances make it intelligible that the hatred should be concentrated mainly on one of the three robbers. It is quite reasonable that foreign sympathy should be extended to the Poles, even by those who are aware that the nation had itself largely to blame for the original calamities.

Teutonic Alsace, Protestant and German-speaking, was

conquered by France in the seventeenth century, the last stage of the conquest being marked by circumstances of exceptional treachery and wrong. Nevertheless it became thoroughly French in sentiment, and strongly resented being re-transferred to victorious Germany in 1871. On which side was the principle of nationality to be invoked in the case of Alsace? The question was answered in 1919. There is nothing but sentiment to draw Alsace towards France, nothing except sentiment to alienate it from Germany.

In Switzerland patriotic feeling is very strong, in spite of the fact that three languages are spoken in the Federal assemblies, and that the cantons are almost equally divided into Protestant and Catholic. The feeling is as strong in the most recent additions to political Switzerland as in the members of the original fourteenth-century confederation, and is warranted by the practical blessings of freedom and good government. Nevertheless, here is vigorous national sentiment which is based on no affinities, and protests against the suggestion that its natural destiny is to separate into its German, French, and Italian elements, and be absorbed in the neighbouring nations.

Scotland has had a long history as a separate nation, and still retains some separate institutions. The sentiment of Scottish nationality is therefore a natural survival, in spite of Scotland having become politically one with England. Wales never had any approach to political unity; but the sentiment which has been assiduously fostered of late years has a basis in the Cymric language still spoken by many of the Welsh people, and in something like separateness of race, though the experts are more and more tending to the opinion that, whatever their language, the Welsh are mainly of a pre-Celtic stock. Ireland never was a nation: the ancient kings of Irish imagination were mere chiefs of warring septs, which gradually came under English rule. The circumstances of its unhappy history, assisted no doubt by its

geographical separateness, have however created two very real and separate sentiments of nationality, as revealed by those who differ fundamentally in race and political aspirations.

Hungary is a nation which maintained at least the appearance of strong patriotic feeling, even when the major part of the inhabitants were alien in race and language to the dominant Magyar element, as, within the restricted Hungary of to-day, they are no longer. Bohemia was formerly a nation in the strict sense, separate politically, separate in race and language, though not without a large foreign infusion, and the Czechs of that territory have become since 1919 the dominant people in the new republic of Czecho-Slovakia.

Italy, when it became politically a nation, did not include all that physical geography would mark off as naturally belonging to it. The sentiment of nationality, which was evoked by hatred of the Austrian yoke in Lombardy, was appealed to where it exists, and even fostered artificially, in order to keep alive a theoretic claim of the kingdom of Italy to further extension. *Italia irredenta*—the phrase obviously begs many questions—was made to include all districts where Italian is spoken. It tacitly demanded that contented Ticino should be detached from Switzerland, that Austria should surrender her whole sea-coast—a strip of land which Italy could not possibly defend—that Malta should be annexed, which has never had any political connexion with Italy since the days of the Roman empire. One does not hear, however, that the advocates of *Italia irredenta* proposed to surrender to France and to Switzerland the French and German-speaking districts of Piedmont. And when, in 1918 and after, the irredentists were able to cry aloud, their claims upon territory east of the Adriatic passed all reason, and were duly discounted.

Other even less tenable pretensions might be quoted, which are based on community of language, or of race. Napoleon III professed to think that France had a natural

right to the headship of all nations speaking a Romance tongue. Russia posed as the natural patron, and destined ruler, of all Slavs and of all adherents of the Greek Church. When German unity became an accomplished fact, there were Germans who (apart from other ambitions) talked as if she were wronged by not including the German-speaking provinces of Austria, and Holland, which speaks a language undoubtedly Teutonic, but practically almost as distinct from German as English. If there were no speciousness in the notions put forward to cover essentially dishonest pretensions, they would not be worth using. It is because the world in general is on the side of virtue, though often without discerning what virtue is, that vice pays to virtue the homage of hypocrisy.

The plea of 'natural frontiers' is less frequently urged than that of nationality, partly because there are comparatively few cases in which it can be used with any semblance of propriety. When it is put forward, it tacitly assumes that geographical facts are of paramount weight, whereas the advocates of 'nationality' usually take no account of physical geography. The subject of the different kinds of frontier, natural or historical, and of their importance in affecting the destinies of mankind, was discussed in a previous chapter. Here it need only be said that the map of Europe affords very few natural boundaries so definite and strongly marked, as to justify the assertion that reason and common sense requires that they should be also political frontiers. About the British isles and the Spanish peninsula no doubt is possible. Italy is almost as distinctly defined by the law of nature. Scandinavia, but for its comparatively short frontier touching Finland, is as insular as Great Britain. The Carpathians in part properly form the frontier between Poland and the Ukraine on the north and Czecho-Slovakia on the south. Among rivers the Drava calls for notice, inasmuch as over a large part of

its course it forms an exceptionally well marked ethnic frontier, between Magyars to the north and Slavs to the south.

There is, however, one claim of 'natural frontiers' which has been of serious historical importance, and has done much mischief.[1] The French have long been experts in the art of devising high-sounding generalities, which shall support their own specific position or claim, and singularly skilful in convincing themselves of their infallible truth. At the Revolution they based their new legislation on a Declaration of the Rights of Man. Long before that they were strenuous in invoking the 'law of nature,' as a basis for doctrines about maritime warfare which it suited France to uphold. On the same principle was put forward, in support of the insatiable French passion for aggrandizement, the theory that the natural frontiers of France were the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the Rhine. Nor is there any reason to doubt the practical efficacy of such arguments. The average Frenchman really believes in them: he thought that France was being defrauded so long as her frontier did not extend to the Rhine. Hence in the many wars of aggression that France has waged, whether inspired by the pure greed of Louis XIV and Napoleon, or by the revolutionary desire to extend the French system to other peoples, the bulk of Frenchmen have sincerely believed their cause to be just. Nay, so great may be the power of a plausible formula, that writers not Frenchmen are found to accept, as having theoretical validity, this French claim to a natural frontier. Geography, of course, lends no support to the most important part of this claim. About the Pyrenees

[1] I have not considered it within the editorial scope to amend this paragraph, save in one trifling instance of tense. It touches subjects which on both political and geographical grounds are debatable, and have recently been debated: the period at which it was written must be borne in mind. [ED.]

there can be no doubt, nor about the Alps between France and Italy. Switzerland is, from the point of view of physical geography, somewhat of an anomaly, though a most beneficial one politically. The whole left bank of the Rhine is, however, and always has been during historical memory, as entirely German in race and language as the right bank. Nor does geography lead one to expect that it would be otherwise. Just as physical geography adopts the whole basin of a given river as a unit, so historical geography shows in general the same race occupying both banks. It is true that a large river is a good defensible line in modern warfare, and that therefore it is convenient to adopt it as the exact boundary, if under all the circumstances of any particular case the frontier is to be fixed thereabouts. Otherwise it is contrary to geography, whether the theory based on purely physical structure, or the practical results of historic and pre-historic human action, to treat a river as a natural frontier. In the particular instance under discussion, it would be almost as reasonable to assert that the Seine was the natural north-eastern frontier of France, as that the Rhine is the natural western frontier of Germany.

Nevertheless, France was justified of her theory in 1919. There were instances of similar theories being put forward by other nations, but the field was more fully occupied by the analogous notions based on nationality. These are very apt to be irreconcilable with 'natural frontiers,' so great is the divergence, from what physical geography might dictate, that has come to pass historically. And it may fairly be said that the cry of nationality is the more likely of the two to deserve political acceptance. A real sentiment, however exaggerated, is a force that must be reckoned with: a theory based on physical facts will remain a theory, unless some corresponding sentiment is evoked. And if it be merely a manipulation of facts to suit ambitious desires, it is one of the basest of impostures. It must be admitted,

however, that during the European settlement of 1919 and following years, as well as by the Central Powers during the war and before, there was plenty of equally base imposture founded upon actual falsification concerning nationality. Dalmatia, Macedonia, the environs of Poland, Slesvik—these names do not stand alone.

There is another generalization about historical facts, based on imperfect understanding of geography, which has been responsible for a good deal of irrelevant nonsense, though fortunately it is not capable of any mischievous use. Certain districts are marked out by nature, it is said, to be the 'cockpits of Europe,' the localities where great battles must from time to time be fought. Of course, there is a small amount of truth in this notion. For instance, in the many wars that have occurred in north Germany, it would be strange if several important encounters had not taken place on the open Saxon plains, where armies can move freely. Somewhere in the Danube basin, battles were sure to be fought when the French invaded Austria. But the real reason why the regions commonly designated the 'cockpits of Europe'—the Netherlands and the plain of the Po—have been the scene of many decisive battles, is not geographical at all. There was never a *great* battle fought in the Netherlands, nothing beyond engagements arising out of some local conflict, large or small, until they passed by inheritance into the hands of the Hapsburgs. Then misgovernment led to the revolt of most of the provinces, and to the desperate struggle which lasted through half the sixteenth century, and ended in the independence of Holland. But this was essentially a local, not a European conflict. The case was altered when that contest left Spain in possession of the Belgian provinces. France, the hereditary enemy of the Hapsburgs, had thenceforth a region where they could be conveniently attacked, and with good fortune despoiled. It is not too much to say that, but for

the permanently aggressive character of French policy, the Netherlands would have seen very few decisive battles. As it was, Louis XIV tried to conquer them, brought upon himself European coalitions formed to check his unscrupulous ambition, and achieved a small measure of success at the cost of several great wars. Revolutionary France annexed Belgium for a time after another war, and lost it again on the fall of Napoleon. The only semblance of a geographical reason for Belgium being a European battlefield appears when Napoleon returned from Elba. Then Belgium was the country in which his two nearest enemies could unite their forces, England from across the North Sea, Prussia from her Rhine provinces. Napoleon saw his advantage in attacking them before his other enemies were ready, and Waterloo was the result. Similarly, the plain of the Po has been in modern times a battle-ground, because Italy had grown helpless politically. France and the Hapsburgs, fighting for the dominion of Italy, necessarily encountered each other in Lombardy. Naturally, it was in earlier times the region where invaders of Italy would be met if possible. Hannibal was encountered on the Trebbia, the Cimbri near the Ticino; but the Allia and Sentinum, Cannae and Benevento, tell another tale.

There is another historical commonplace based on geography, which deserves at least a passing notice. This is the idea set forth in Wordsworth's famous sonnet, that the sea and the mountains are the natural homes of liberty. It is unnecessary to speculate as to whether the poet's generalization was based upon more than a single instance of each. History shows that there is a certain element of superficial truth in the dictum, and geography can point out the reason why; but it will be obvious that the term 'liberty' is used ambiguously. Mountains are a refuge for a people who have the courage to sacrifice much in order to preserve their independence. They abandon the fertile

plains, commit themselves to a ruder life, and are prepared to fight desperately, rather than submit to the foreigner. This implies real courage and strength of will, but is compatible with the most backward civilization, with great capacity for tyrannizing over others. The Scottish Highlanders adhered obstinately to their primitive clan system, and to cattle-lifting in the Lowlands. The mountaineers of Uri kept in the harshest subjection the people of what is now canton Ticino. The liberty which has its home in the mountains may only mean a bigoted determination to go one's own way. The Swiss, throughout their history, have combined with sturdy defence of their independence a large amount of political liberty; but there is not much trace of either among the people inhabiting an equally mountainous region south of the Alps. Still more emphatic is the contrast between Switzerland and its nearest neighbour. Tyrol is geographically indistinguishable from eastern Switzerland, and the people are of the same race. Yet the Tyrolese have never shown any leanings towards democracy: their heroic struggle against a foreign yoke was inspired by hereditary devotion to those very Hapsburgs whom the Swiss had resisted as tyrants.

A seafaring people will, from the nature of the case, become acquainted with foreign nations and their ideas. It has good opportunities of acquiring wealth, as well as breadth of view, and so far as the progress of civilized mankind is towards political liberty, is not likely to be backward in the movement. Commerce cannot flourish without the security afforded by good government, and is fatally stunted by oppressive taxation, which is more likely to be imposed by a despot or narrow oligarchy than under a freer political system. Sailors must have a large share of courage, and that of the daring rather than of the passive order; and therefore a maritime nation is likely to strive boldly for its aims, whatever they may be. History, how-

ever, gives very slight support to the theory that the sea is favourable to political freedom. Athenian citizens lived in extreme democratic equality among themselves; but they were slave-holders, and grossly oppressive to their dependent allies. Carthage had the faults of Athens in stronger measure, was more essentially maritime, and was not democratic. Among the maritime states in mediaeval Italy, Venice, which proved the strongest, had an exceptionally narrow oligarchy. The instances which favour the theory are Holland, the most exclusively maritime of all nations, and England. The former fought for its independence with tenacity exceeding that ever needed by the Swiss, and against greater odds. The latter has taught the modern world what constitutional liberty means, but can hardly be said to have learned it through the sea, except so far as insularity favoured the English habit of resenting any form of foreign interference. The only real assistance that the sea gives to political liberty is, however, best exemplified by England. If the main fighting strength of a nation is in its navy, that strength cannot be used by would-be tyrants, whether legitimate or revolutionary, to oppress its citizens. Blake expressed not merely his own view, but a permanent truth, when, on being asked to take part against Cromwell, he replied that his business was not to interfere in politics, but 'to keep foreigners from fooling us.'

CHAPTER VII

SEA POWER IN PEACE AND WAR

Sea power, naval or commercial, obviously cannot exist unless the geographical conditions permit; and the more favourable these conditions the greater the power is likely to be. The evidence of history is, however, strongly against the assumption that geographical facilities alone will make a people maritime. The Phoenicians and the Jews dwelt side by side on the same coast, but they made very different uses of their opportunities. The Phoenicians filled the Mediterranean with their commerce, and were the greatest maritime adventurers of the ancient world, carrying their explorations far along the Atlantic coasts both north and south of the entrance to the Mediterranean, if indeed they did not actually circumnavigate Africa. The Jews never developed any aptitude for the sea: Solomon at the height of his power, though fully alive to the value of commerce, seems to have employed Phoenician mariners. Venice and Genoa were indeed almost compelled by geography to be great at sea, if they were to be great at all. Genoa, shut in by the Appennines, had no choice: Venice was safe behind her lagoons so long as she made no attempt at the acquisition of territory inland. Geography, however, does not account for the energy which enabled them to surpass all maritime competitors, both in war and in peace: many other places in the Mediterranean had similar opportunities.

Holland is the most conspicuous instance of a state wholly created by the sea: its ocean commerce developed hardy explorers as well as skilful seamen, and supplied the wealth which enabled the Dutch to carry through their long struggle for independence, and afterwards to maintain during most of the seventeenth century the most powerful fleet in the world. The whole region of the Rhine delta had for many centuries shared the same destinies. Small principalities and city republics were intermingled, most of them technically included in the empire, some under the formal suzerainty of France, but all practically independent. Then they had gradually come under the dominion of Burgundy, afterwards inherited by Spain; all were equally injured and aggrieved by the Spanish kings trampling on their ancient liberties and privileges. All rose in arms, but the south succumbed to the foreign yoke, while the north persevered. That the Belgians thenceforth had little opportunity of maritime development was not their fault; but nothing indicates that they ever possessed the same aptitude for maritime pursuits as the Dutch.

When ocean commerce began, Spain had an incredible start. She possesses a large extent of coast, several excellent harbours, and a very favourable position on the globe. She had also the further inestimable advantage of having been the first to take possession of vast tracts in the New World. The bad financial policy of the government is doubtless partly answerable for the waste of these advantages, but only in part. The people have never exhibited the commercial spirit, nor valued industry in any form, and they apparently lack the maritime aptitude conspicuous in some other races. Neither in naval war, nor in commerce, nor in exploration, have any Spaniards been really distinguished, at any rate since Spain was united under one crown: the Catalan sailors contributed

much towards making Aragon a power in the previous centuries. The greatest of all discoveries was made under the Castilian flag, but Columbus was not a Spaniard. Two Spaniards indeed rank high among the daring and usually unscrupulous adventurers who have carved out greatness for themselves with the sword; but Cortes and Pizarro were not sailors, except in the sense that they crossed the Atlantic. Indeed the often-quoted action of Cortes, in burning his ships after landing in Mexico, is the best proof that his instincts were not maritime. It was a magnificent piece of daring, none the less admirable because based on calculation; but it was obviously not the act of a man who valued and relied on the sea. Spain has had great navies at one time and another, which have fought with admirable courage; but their great disasters, St. Vincent, Trafalgar, above all the Armada, have been largely due to want of seamanship in the widest sense. Despite the advantages of their geography, the Spaniards are not, and never have been, seamen comparable to the English or the Dutch, or even the French. This is all the more remarkable since the Portuguese, scarcely distinguishable from them in race, produced during their short golden age at least two very great explorers, Vasco da Gama and Magalhaens, besides others of lesser note. Moreover they established considerable commerce with the East Indies, from which they were only ousted after a long struggle with the Dutch. It may, however, be plausibly argued that the maritime success of the Portuguese was artificial, due to the initiative of Prince Henry the Navigator, and that when his influence died out, the maritime greatness of Portugal died too.

In face of these, and other less striking instances which might be adduced, it is impossible to maintain that environment alone causes or prevents maritime power. Nor do the cases given accord with the theory that it is a matter

of race; in fact the evidence tends rather the other way. For instance, the Bretons, the most distinctively Celtic of the French people, are also their best sailors: whereas it is certainly not from the Celtic sections of the population that the British navy has been chiefly manned or officered. The Boers of the Transvaal, descended from a highly maritime people and sedulous in maintaining the tradition of their descent, exhibited, incidentally to the South African war, an almost grotesque dread of the ocean: they regarded being sent over sea as a horrible injury to the prisoners. The Norsemen and their descendants are perhaps the only race of whom it can be said that they are instinctively maritime. Even the Greeks, though the waters of the Levant served to unite Hellas and Ionia rather than to separate them, rather dreaded than loved the sea. Aristotle (*Ethics*, iii. 7), arguing that it is not true courage to be insensible to fear, takes as his instances of things which every one must fear, earthquakes and the waves. The whole tone of ancient literature, so far as we possess it, Hebrew and Latin as well as Greek, agrees with Horace's language in the familiar ode:—

> Illi robur et aes triplex
> Circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci
> Commisit pelago ratem.

It is only in modern times, and almost exclusively among men who have inherited Norse blood, that the temper has been developed which loves the sea, and enjoys encountering its perils—a temper almost essential to maritime exploration, and of obvious value for all maritime enterprise, alike in peace and in war.

If then the evidence forbids us to attribute the development of maritime power in a given nation either to race or to geographical position, can any principle be discovered? The cautious historian will probably come to the conclusion

that it depends on natural selection in the widest sense, on the resultant of many forces, political fortunes and the appearance of great leaders or foreseeing statesmen, as well as race and geographical advantages. Nevertheless, there are many ways in which geographical conditions help or hinder a nation's power, in the form both of commercial wealth and of fighting strength at sea.

Commerce, for obvious reasons, is mostly worked by established routes, and the direction of these is mainly determined by geography. On land, mountain chains and other obstacles impede commerce or drive it to circuitous channels; at sea, prevailing winds and currents determine the best course for ships. Commercial routes are of course liable to change from age to age under the influence of new geographical discoveries, or of political revolutions; but they remain fixed, failing such disturbing forces. Even in the ancient world, when ships rarely ventured out of sight of land, commerce was mainly carried on by sea, more apparently than in the Middle Ages, when for various reasons the products of the east largely came into Europe by land. After the invention of the compass made it feasible to traverse the ocean in all directions, instead of hugging the coast, the advantages of sea transport for merchandise became even greater. From about the date of the discovery of America, commerce tended to be more and more completely maritime, except for purely internal trade. The invention of steam, while facilitating ocean navigation, has rather checked than augmented this tendency. The immensely improved speed at which goods can be conveyed by means of railways has given back to land carriage a little of its lost importance; but the sea, nevertheless, remains the chief medium of commercial intercourse. It is mainly, though not entirely, of maritime trade that we must be thinking, if we attempt to trace the modes in which geographical conditions tend to favour,

or to injure, the commercial welfare of a given city or country.

The Mediterranean was for many ages the centre of human civilization—assuming that we leave out of view the abnormal and isolated civilization of China. But there never was a time within historical memory when the luxuries of the east did not reach the Mediterranean, and form an important element in its trade. Until the discovery of America revolutionized commerce, this state of things continued; and it is chiefly in the political events which altered the channels of eastern trade, that history and geography react on each other in relation to commerce before the sixteenth century.

There are three possible routes by which the gold and diamonds, the silk and spices of the East Indies could be conveyed to the Mediterranean basin—one altogether maritime as far as the Egyptian ports on the Red Sea, one up the Persian Gulf and across by land either through Asia Minor to Constantinople or to the Syrian ports, one entirely by land to the shores of the Black Sea. So long as Egypt continued to be a highly civilized country, that is to say down to the era of Mohammedan conquests, the Red Sea route conveyed the greater part of the traffic from the east, with which were included the products of Arabia and eastern Africa, so far as they reached Europe at all. The Greeks apparently carried on most part of the trade in the Black Sea and in the eastern half of the Mediterranean, though they voyaged but little beyond Sicily. The Phoenicians, or the Carthaginians who succeeded to the position of the mother city, practically monopolized the commerce of the western Mediterranean, after the Etruscan power dwindled, and of the Atlantic coasts. Under the Roman empire trade flourished: general peace made it secure, and the prevailing luxury created a great demand for the commodities ministering to pleasure or ostentation. It seems that

the volume of trade greatly diminished when the irruption of the Teutons impoverished the peoples of western Europe, and caused a distinct temporary retrogression in general civilization. Commerce was not, however, diverted from its old channel until the successors of Mohammed overran Egypt. Thenceforth the Red Sea trade dwindled, and, so far as Europe was concerned, ultimately ceased to exist, the most significant event being the destruction in A. D. 767 of the canal joining the Nile to the Red Sea. Eastern commerce followed the alternative routes mentioned above.

Constantinople, situated, as has been said, where two seas and two continents meet, had been a place of great trade long before it was made the capital of the Roman empire. The division of the empire into east and west, followed by the submergence of the western half under the Teuton floods, left Constantinople more than ever the head quarters of civilization. The loss of Syria and Egypt, while grievously curtailing the Eastern empire, worked to the advantage of the capital, which became the one emporium of all trade between Europe and the east. The strength of the Saracens in the Mediterranean, followed by the appearance there of the Norsemen, drove much of the trade to follow overland routes. Land traffic up the Danube into central Europe, or across the Balkan peninsula to the Adriatic in order to reach Italy, all started from Constantinople, which enjoyed a commercial pre-eminence such as no other city has ever possessed.

It was again political events which brought the Mediterranean trade back to its natural maritime channels, and destroyed the preponderance of Constantinople. Its admirable geographical position was not sufficient to compensate for political decay at home, in the face of new competition. The Normans drove the Saracens off the sea, and themselves settled down to civilization. The Eastern empire lost Asia Minor, and bad government

diminished its wealth. The Italian maritime cities rose to importance, and pushed their trade into what had been the domain of the Greeks. The Crusades at once increased the European demand for eastern luxuries which grew more familiar, and enabled them to be fetched from the Syrian ports in the ships of Venice and Genoa. Finally, the fourth Crusade dealt a deadly blow to the Eastern empire: thenceforth the trade of Constantinople itself passed almost entirely into Italian hands.

It is a fair matter of speculation how much the superior geographical position of Venice contributed to giving her the advantage over her rival, in spite of Genoa having succeeded in establishing preponderant influence at Constantinople. Venice was conveniently situated for the land traffic across the Balkan peninsula, and within reach of easy routes over the Alps into Germany. Genoese trade was easy into France, but had a formidable competitor in Marseilles: in order to reach the Rhine-land it had to cross both Appennines and Alps. The time, however, was rapidly approaching when geographical discovery should supersede Venice and Genoa as the great *foci* of European commerce.

The discovery of America, followed immediately by the opening of the Cape route to India, transferred the centre of gravity of the commercial world to the shores of the Atlantic. The Spaniards and Portuguese, who had the first chance, failed to make good use of it. Holland, followed in point of time and ultimately outstripped by England, developed the naval aptitude requisite, and became for the world at large what Carthage, and Constantinople, and Venice, had in turn been for the Mediterranean basin. It was naval strength, added to perfect geographical position, which gave England her immense commercial preponderance. And since nothing succeeds like success, the cutting of the Suez canal, which it was imagined might

restore to the Mediterranean ports their lost advantages, has practically facilitated English trade. German commerce, centred in the North Sea ports, was introducing a measure of rivalry before the Great War. It is obvious that Hamburg and Bremen are virtually in the same position on the globe as London, without the security of being on an island, but with the advantage of having the Continent open behind them.

Naval warfare, pure and simple, is but little controlled by geographical conditions. An army can only move by roads, and must in general keep open its communications with its base—the occasions on which it can venture to ignore this necessity are too few and exceptional to be worth dwelling on. The sea is open in all directions, and trackless: a fleet can go anywhere at any time, and leaves no trace of its passage. A fleet necessarily carries its own supplies on board, and is only controlled by the need of renewing them: and this may be done either by having recourse to a friendly port, or by the dispatch of laden vessels from home. Before the invention of steam power the winds played a very important part in naval warfare; now it is probable that adverse weather is as great a hindrance to an army as to a fleet. An army is absolutely forbidden to enter neutral territory. If it does so voluntarily, that is an act of war against the neutral; if involuntarily, the troops driven on to neutral soil are the prisoners of the neutral power, and remain so until the end of the war. Ships of war are in general not refused admission to neutral harbours, though the duration and conditions of their stay, and the nature and amount of supplies which they are allowed to obtain on shore, are in war time very strictly limited by modern usage.

In land warfare, the stronger power usually invades, while the weaker stands on the defensive. The weaker may of course try to snatch an advantage by striking first,

but this is exceptional. In any case, the invader is free to select his line or lines of invasion, though in doing so he is necessarily governed very greatly by the geography. When, however, he has once begun in earnest, he is committed to that particular course, and only withdraws from it if defeated. Moreover, in every step forward, the topographical conditions are of vital importance. The commander on the defending side may, or may not, be able to foresee, by the aid of geography, the direction of the coming invasion. Even if he cannot, he knows when it has begun what his task is: he must resist the enemy where the attack is delivered, and he can utilize such geographical features of the country as are within the sphere of operations, and those only.

In purely naval warfare, the conditions are totally different. The stronger side can have but one naval objective, the destruction of the enemy's fleet, wherever that can be found. Some part of its force may have to be employed for other purposes, of which protecting the national commerce is the most obvious, but these are merely incidental duties. The weaker side sometimes declines to risk a combat, and keeps its ships in harbour, under the protection of minefields and shore fortifications. More commonly, it will try to prey on the enemy's commerce, or to form combinations whereby a portion of the enemy's fleet may be taken at a disadvantage. Both sides can pass and repass freely over the ocean, which belongs to neither. A circuitous route to a given destination involves no permanent difficulty of communications, nothing but immediate loss of time. Battles are fought not in positions prepared beforehand, but on the trackless water. They are indeed likely to take place somewhere near belligerent ports, if a fleet is intercepted when trying to quit or enter one, or near ocean trade routes on which merchant shipping may have to be protected or made prize

of. Otherwise geography influences the course of naval warfare but little.

One important matter, essential to the conduct of war at sea under modern conditions, must not be forgotten. Steam power having become universal, ships of war are liable to be rendered helpless unless they can renew from time to time their supply of coal or oil. It is essential that there should be ports, in reasonable proximity to the locality where a fleet is operating, at which fuel is readily procurable. In time of peace there is obviously no difficulty; a man-of-war is at liberty to enter any harbour of any nation in which fuel is for sale. In war time, however, the case is very different. Fuel is undoubtedly a munition of war, which any neutral nation would be justified in refusing to allow a belligerent ship to obtain in its ports. It may be impossible to bind the neutral to refuse such accommodation, though the other belligerent might reasonably regard allowing it as unfriendly, even as a definite act of hostility. Hence during war a belligerent ship, unless it can have fuel sent after it, a most cumbrous and difficult alternative, can only rely on obtaining supplies at a harbour belonging to its own state, or to an ally, should several nations be involved in the war. The practical result is to compel maritime states, which may have interests to guard, or naval warfare to conduct at a distance from their own shores, to acquire coaling stations, under penalty of not being able to carry on war away from their own waters. During the war of 1898 between Spain and the United States, for instance, it would have been impossible for an American fleet to attack the coasts of Spain. On the other hand, there is no power on the continent of Europe, except possibly France, which could make a naval attack on the coasts of the United States: and even the French harbours in the West Indies are a long way from any point worth attacking.

Even in the days before steam, the maritime nations deemed it well worth their while to occupy isolated spots on routes important for their trade. It was as a port of call on the voyage to the East Indies that the Dutch occupied the cape of Good Hope, and the English St. Helena. The French made of Mauritius something more, a secure base from which their Indian enterprises might be dispatched or controlled. What was highly convenient in former times has become essential now. Singapore, which is sometimes called 'the coal-hole of the east,' and Aden, which deserves a similar appellation, are among the most valued of British possessions. Malta proved of inestimable value in the Great War, as a base for British and allied naval strength in the Mediterranean. These are only instances: there are plenty of other coaling stations about the world, belonging to a variety of nations, and it is in the nature of things that more should be established.

It is obvious that coaling stations, if they are to perform their vital function of furnishing resources for naval war, must be adequately fortified and garrisoned. Otherwise they offer tempting marks for a hostile attack; and they either are doubly lost—for the capture of them transfers to the enemy the advantage which they were intended to provide—or they cripple the naval campaign by requiring a fleet for their protection. The proper maintenance of coaling stations once established, a nation which is strong at sea will find no real difficulty in reinforcing and otherwise supplying them during war, and will derive inestimable advantage from them. On the other hand, they are a serious tax on the resources of a belligerent who is weaker at sea than his antagonist. In fact, he is in a painful dilemma: without them he cannot wage war on

equal terms at a distance, while, if he holds them, he is extremely likely to see them captured. Germany, from the earliest period of the Great War, was deprived of any method of coaling save at sea from tenders or captured traders; later, her submarines obtained fuel from dépôts maintained in a precarious secrecy.

There is every difference between purely naval warfare and military expeditions sent over sea, though the latter are obviously feasible only to a tolerably strong maritime power. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that a serious invasion over sea is impossible in face of superior naval strength, though of course expeditions on a smaller scale are feasible under certain conditions. Descents made by a pretender on his native soil are obviously not cases in point. Such an expedition depends for success on the amount of support its leader receives among the people of the country he thus enters, not on continued supplies from the land he set out from. The only apparent exception to the rule really confirms it: Alexander the Great invaded the Persian empire in face of a fleet so superior that he thought it useless to maintain one in opposition to it. His invasion was, however, made across the very narrow waters separating Europe from Asia Minor, and in his days there was no thought of keeping an army continually supplied from its base of operations. Moreover, Alexander showed, as soon as he had mastered Asia Minor, his full appreciation of the value of naval power. He proceeded to besiege Tyre, the head quarters of the naval power of Persia, and persevered, in spite of enormous difficulties, to a successful end. Then, aided by circumstances in some sense geographical—by the fact that the Phoenicians and Asiatic Greeks, who furnished the king of Persia with a fleet, were merely his subjects, and had no attachment to his throne—Alexander transferred to himself

the preponderance of maritime strength. He was thereby enabled to conquer Syria and Egypt, and so establish a firm basis for his empire round the eastern Mediterranean.

The dispatch of an army by sea is always a serious undertaking, even if the troops are being sent to a friendly country. It involves the assembling of a vast number of ships, a tedious embarkation, safe convoy across the water, and an equally tedious landing. Steam has eliminated one great difficulty, the need of waiting for a favourable wind: but the *impedimenta* of a modern army have grown so great that either the number or the size of the transports must be far larger than formerly, involving increased time and trouble in landing. Of course, if the expedition be for the invasion of a hostile country, other difficulties arise. The invading army, assuming it to succeed in landing, has to bring all its supplies and reinforcements, and to keep up its communication with home for all purposes, also across the sea, giving occasion for much delay, and opportunity for the invaded state, if not utterly bereft of a navy, to strike dangerous blows. And if the invading army be defeated and driven back upon its ships, it cannot expect to re-embark without very heavy loss.

As against these serious drawbacks, an expedition sent by sea has one immense advantage. It can land at any place on the hostile coast which is not too strongly defended. The enemy therefore, unless able to fight at sea, must guard the whole coast, or resign himself to being invaded, and trust to being able to meet the invaders before they have had time to do serious harm. So great is this advantage that a high military authority of the nineteenth century maintained that in case of a general European war, with France and Russia in arms against the Triple Alliance, the British fleet alone would be worth something like half a million of men to the Triple Alliance. Germany being decidedly inferior to Russia at sea, and Italy to France, he

argued, they must guard their coasts everywhere: and this he calculated would require for Germany 200,000 men and for Italy 300,000. The British fleet would have given preponderance at sea to the Triple Alliance, and therefore have set free all those men for active operations on land. It is immaterial whether the conditions have or have not altered, whether the original calculation was numerically accurate. Within possibly wide limits it was obviously sound, and it affords an apt theoretical illustration of the power which naval strength may confer for military purposes. There is one possible flaw in such reasoning: the state threatened with invasion might leave the coasts alone, and keep an army at some central spot ready to be dispatched against the invader wherever he appeared. It is not, however, every government which would have the nerve to face the risk of an invasion unresisted, even for a few days, just as very few troops will fight in line with no reserves behind them. It is obvious, however, that with the telegraph to give instantaneous information, and with railways immensely accelerating the transport of troops over long distances, the time during which an invader landing on the coast would be free to act unopposed becomes very short. The risk of failure is so much increased that the prize of success need be great indeed to justify incurring it. Practically no military expedition over sea is worth while unless the invader can calculate on supporting it with his full fighting strength, which implies permanent command of the sea, or, at the very least, inflicting some irreparable injury on the enemy. War between England and France, other powers for whatever reason being not concerned, has happened before, and might occur again. In that case, a French invasion of England, given the present proportion of naval strength, would be lunacy, unless it were thought worth while to sacrifice the whole expedition for the chance (say) of destroying Portsmouth. An English invasion of

France, unless for a similar object, would be equally foolish, because no command of the sea could avail to maintain an invading army against the gigantic numbers which a great nation, having universal military service, can place in the field.

A very narrow arm of the sea will serve as an impassable barrier, if the difference in naval strength be sufficiently great. In 1402 Timur, with his destroying hordes out of central Asia, totally defeated the Ottoman Sultan, and overran Asia Minor with ease. But as he had no ships, he was unable to cross into Europe: the relics of the Ottoman power were safe beyond the narrow Bosphorus. In 1812–3 England was able to guarantee Sweden against attack by Napoleon's overwhelming land armies across the almost equally narrow straits at the entrance of the Baltic. When Napoleon expelled the Bourbon king from Naples, he was powerless to deprive him also of Sicily; nor, though the whole of the territories belonging to the king of Sardinia on the mainland were actually annexed to France, had Napoleon ever a chance, in face of the British fleet, of acquiring the island of Sardinia.

Historical instances showing what an army can and cannot do, when transported and maintained from beyond the sea, are best taken from English history. England, as an island state, has necessarily carried on war in no other way, if we leave out civil wars, or what for geographical purposes at least amount to the same thing, wars with Scotland before the union of the kingdoms. Indeed, there have been very few such enterprises which were not English, at least in modern history; ancient history records the disastrous failure of the Athenian expedition to Sicily, in spite of Athens being the leading naval power in the Greek world, and Scipio's success in carrying the second Punic war into Africa. The latter is scarcely a case in point, as Rome and Carthage were then fighting for the mastery all

round and over the western Mediterranean. The naval superiority of Rome, however, was a most important factor in the war It compelled Hannibal, whose real starting-point was the new, not the old Carthage, to pass the Pyrenees and the Alps in order to invade Italy, and prevented his deriving any real support from home.

English history however abounds in instances, from expeditions which were little more than raids to long and serious wars, some successful, some disastrous, but most of them illustrating one or more of the general principles already indicated. These are: (1) the assailant has the great advantage of surprise, as the enemy cannot tell where, perhaps not when, the blow will fall: (2) the assailant has another advantage in mobility; he can with comparative ease shift his base of operations: (3) military failure will involve disproportionate loss.

The expedition sent in 1807 to Copenhagen, in order to forestall Napoleon's intended seizure of the Danish fleet, was perfectly successful, partly at least because the Danes were surprised, though they were probably not very reluctant to yield to palpably superior force. Buckingham's expedition to the isle of Rhé, in 1627, succeeded at the outset, but proved a disastrous failure because it was impossible to sustain it from home when France put out her strength. When Sir John Moore was left in command of a small English army at Lisbon, in the latter part of the year 1808, Napoleon was himself in Spain with probably ten times as many troops. Nevertheless Moore could advance into the heart of Spain, seriously threatening Napoleon's communications, because he could change his base at will. He lost seriously in retreating to Corunna, but he would never have been able to return to Lisbon at all, since the very superior French forces, instead of merely pushing him back towards his port of embarkation, would have been able to take him in flank. Similarly, in

the last campaign of the Peninsular war, Wellington based his whole scheme on the same facility. He dislodged the French armies, which opposed his advance from the Douro to the Bidassoa, by continually turning their right flank. And this he was able to do because, instead of dragging a lengthening chain from Lisbon, he could transfer his supplies round to the ports on the bay of Biscay, whence the distance to his left wing was very short. In 1854 the allies landed unopposed on the coast of the Crimea, because they were free to select the spot; and when, rightly or wrongly, they deemed it necessary to pass Sebastopol, they were free to fix themselves as they would on the coast to the south of the town. Their base being in fact the sea, they could utilize equally well whatever ports were for military reasons convenient. It should be said, however, that the task of capturing Sebastopol would have been considerably harder if the Russians had possessed a railway into the Crimea, or even thoroughly good roads.

A less obvious, but even more important, illustration of the value of the sea as a base of operations is furnished by the campaign of Waterloo. Wellington's army was guarding the western portion of the Belgian frontier, drawing its supplies from the sea, chiefly through Ostend. The Prussians lay along the eastern part of the frontier, their base being on the Rhine. So long as the allies were united, they were far stronger than Napoleon; the risk lay in their being separated. This the two generals agreed should not happen, and their adherence to this resolve, in spite of Napoleon's having struck successfully at the point of junction between them, was rewarded by complete success. It will be plain that the difficulty was much diminished by the fact that Wellington's base was the sea. If forced to retreat he could, at the cost of some inconvenience, direct his supplies through Antwerp instead of Ostend, or even through ports further north. Blücher ran a greater

risk, but he might reasonably rely on temporary assistance from his English colleague, and the need could be but temporary. These considerations may, or may not, have been present to the minds of Wellington and Blücher: the whole campaign was too short for any difficulty to have actually arisen; but they are written on the face of the map.

Wolfe's attack on Quebec, though the whole expedition was on no very great scale, gives perhaps the most perfect illustration in all history of what sea power can do to assist military operations. Wolfe's expedition sailed up the St. Lawrence unopposed, the French having practically no men-of-war to face the escorting fleet. Having command of the water, Wolfe could land anywhere, and naturally pitched his camp on the south bank of the river, Quebec being on the north, with the French camp along the same shore below the town. By means of the ships Wolfe could attack the French when he pleased, and they could not tell until the last moment where the attack would be delivered. The natural strength of the place was great, and the French had a considerable superiority in numbers, though part of their forces were of comparatively little value. Nevertheless, by judicious use of the fleet Wolfe succeeded in landing unopposed, and in fighting a battle under conditions which prevented the enemy from bringing his full strength to bear, so that the superior quality of the British troops won an easy victory.

The same general conclusions can be deduced from the long and sustained wars which England has conducted, with every condition against her except sea power. The Hundred Years' war opened with the great naval victory of Sluys: thenceforth English forces could be landed almost anywhere on the French coast. And if the war ended in failure, the task of conquering France being impossible if France chose to resist steadily, it was through the facilities offered by the sea that it achieved a consider-

able measure of temporary success. The same holds good of the Peninsular war as a whole, of which more is said in another chapter. On the other hand, when the American colonies revolted, their success was assured when France and Spain took part in the war, thereby temporarily depriving England of that full command of the sea, without which her armies in America could not be reinforced or supplied. As for the maintenance of the seaway between England and France during the Great War, in daily and hourly use during four years with the very minimum of mishap, the example is too familiar to need elaboration.

CHAPTER VIII

GEOGRAPHY IN WAR

War, in the modern sense of the word, is altogether based on geography. The determining motives may be very various, from the selfish ambition of a despot to the excitement of a democracy that deems the national honour insulted; but they do not much influence the methods in which war is carried on. These depend, mainly if not entirely, on the geographical conditions of each separate case; and the meaning of these has to be deduced from the state of the art of war, which varies from age to age.

This is obvious in relation to modern wars, into which the intellectual element enters ever more and more, as operations of all kinds become more elaborate; but it holds good universally. Even in the encounters between contiguous tribes of savages, which may more appropriately be called fighting than war, the configuration of the ground gives advantage, casually or through design, to one party or the other. It is impossible to imagine geographical conditions under which the surface of the earth should be entirely featureless. Even on an open plain there must be water, or human life cannot be sustained; and water at once influences the mode in which warfare can be carried on. In deserts, where springs are not numerous and the streams originating in them dry up or sink into the earth after a short course, the spots where springs rise become strategic points of vital importance. On a more fertile plain, the streams, large and small, become obstacles and therefore

lines of defence. They can be forded only at certain points, or their banks are marshy: and the flatter the plain the more likely it is that the small streams will be found to be thus rendered difficult of passage. Moreover, human occupation rapidly gives artificial importance to certain spots. The exact localities in which towns grow up may be determined, on an open plain, by more or less trivial accidents. Probably it would have made no difference, at any rate from a military point of view, if they had grown elsewhere. But when once they have been established, they are henceforth points at which an enemy must strike if he intends conquest, which he will avoid if intending a mere raid, within which the inhabitants will gather for defence, or to plan a counter attack. Roads are marked out leading from one town to another, which will naturally cross the streams at convenient spots; and these become of ever increasing importance as warfare is more developed.

Thus even on the flattest plain conceivable, there is ample opportunity for geography to influence the course of warfare: and as a matter of fact really flat plains are few, if we leave out of sight the deserts which barely admit of any settled inhabitants. In the regions which are habitually, and quite reasonably, regarded as level because they contain no important ranges of hills, there are usually minor inequalities of surface sufficient to make a vast difference in the conduct of a campaign, still more in the tactics of battle. For instance, European Russia is always described as one vast plain: in the whole expanse there is only one range of hills worth marking on a map of moderate scale. In the 500 miles or more between the frontier and Moscow, traversed by Napoleon's invading army in 1812, there are no variations of level exceeding about 200 feet: yet the campaign was as full as any other of occasions on which the geography, or the topography, materially influenced the course of events.

In average country there are of course the same geographical conditions affecting war as on the flattest plain, and others besides. There are rivers large and small, with the towns and other results of human occupation: and there are also hills, and perhaps mountains, which may in many ways influence the course of military operations. A considerable mountain range, if it lies between the belligerents, is a serious obstacle to the assailant, and probably determines the plan of defence for the other party. If it runs at an angle to the common frontier, it will tend to limit the theatre of operations to one side or the other of the chain. Lesser ranges of hills, besides acting somewhat in the same way as greater ones, may furnish defensive positions, or shelter from the enemy's observation the movement of troops. Isolated hills, while serving on a small scale as points in a position for battle, are also of great value as stations for reconnoitring.

Occasionally warfare has to be carried on in a region which is altogether mountainous, as for instance in nearly all the fighting which has taken place in India since the suppression of the Mutiny, or when the Tyrolese rose in 1809 against the Bavarian rule imposed on them by Napoleon. In that case so much must turn upon the configuration of every mile of ground, which will of course vary indefinitely, that very little generalization is possible. Very much greater advantage will obviously be derived from thorough knowledge of the ground in mountainous than in level country, whether that belongs to native inhabitants or to troops specially trained. A marked instance of the former is unfortunately familiar to us in the Transvaal. In that extremely difficult and broken region, armed bodies of Boers repeatedly evaded pursuit and surprised English detachments, through their knowledge of the ground enabling them to move by night or in any weather, which their enemies necessarily could not do. An instance of the latter

is to be found in the admirable work done by the native guides on the north-west frontier of India.

Paradoxical as it may sound, thoroughly mountainous country in one respect approximates closely, for military purposes, to open plain. Exceptional importance in both attaches to roads. The flatter a plain is, the more likely it is that there will be marshy ground, through which a properly made road is essential, as conducting perhaps to the only spots where rivers can be crossed. Similarly, in really mountainous country the existence of a road will determine the direction in which advance can be made. Probably in both cases troops can move, with more or less difficulty, without roads: it is perfectly possible that the route adopted for a given mountain road is merely one of several that might have been selected. The existence, however, of a properly constructed road makes so great a difference that it practically will be used even for troops; and for their *impedimenta* there can hardly be any option. A general defending a mountain ridge might well hesitate to destroy the one road across it, so long as he intended any defence at all. So long as the road was available, he might feel certain that he could concentrate his energies on holding it: if it had ceased to exist, his assailants would be left to the resources of nature, and might advance by any line that was naturally feasible. In ordinary country, where there are neither large marshy tracts, nor difficult hills, troops can much more easily move in the open, away from roads, always assuming that the fields are not thickly enclosed, as is mostly the case in England. For its heavy train an army must everywhere depend on roads, but the more the actual troops can dispense with them the faster an advance can be made.

Thoroughly mountainous regions, that can become the theatre of war, are however rare, almost as rare as featureless plains. For the most obvious reasons, military opera-

tions are commonly conducted in what may be called average country—with probably a fair admixture of hill and dale, with the land at any rate high enough in general above the streams not to be converted into swamp. Such land is the fittest in all respects for human occupation, and therefore contains a maximum of population, and the largest share of the points which an invader would naturally aim at. We may take it that most campaigns are conducted in country of this type, more or less level without being a dead flat, more or less fringed or intersected by hills and mountains without being filled with them, and certainly traversed by a fair number of streams large and small, which may run at any angle to the line of operations. About campaigns in country of this description it is possible to generalize, and discover in what ways geography will commonly affect the operations of war. Inferences from them may be little applicable to extremes of mountain or of plain: but the latter, being exceptional, will very probably present each its own problems for solution, and experience derived from one will be relevant only in the vaguest way to another.

Two modern pieces of warfare carried out by English troops are cases in point. In the Khartum campaign the advance was made up the Nile and across desert, the general making his own road as he moved, and accumulating on it almost unlimited supplies. It would have been a very dubious inference from the perfect success of that expedition to imagine that the same thing would be feasible in European warfare. In the Sudan there was no choice of method, and the enemy waited to be attacked: a civilized enemy would certainly not allow time for a process so elaborate. The theatre of the war in South Africa, besides being very extensive, is generally mountainous, and exceptional in its mountain formation. It is a country in which mounted troops have especial advantages, in which also innumerable defensive positions can be found. It would, however, have

been very hazardous to infer from South African experience that the whole future of war was with mounted troops, or that the Boer tactics could be successfully adopted on the European plain, and the Great War disposed of both inferences.

The general modes in which geographical considerations govern the conduct of war may perhaps be best seen if we start from the alphabet of the art of war, from the primary distinction between strategy and tactics. Strategy is the art of conducting a campaign—of so moving armies as to obtain advantages over the enemy without fighting, and to encounter him on favourable conditions when battles have to be fought. Tactics is the art of fighting, of so using troops as to have the best chance of defeating the enemy. Both strategy and tactics are in some sense twofold, for attack and for defence: the two are clearly separable in theory, even though practically there are few campaigns in which one side is altogether on the defensive throughout.

When one nation attacks another, the assailant will from the nature of the case have some object in view, for which invasion across the common frontier will be the first step. (Nations which have no common frontier can of course only engage in maritime warfare, or in invading expeditions carried over sea, which are irrelevant for the present purpose.) Many considerations other than geographical may determine the object to be aimed at: for instance, it may be thought expedient to occupy immediately a piece of territory that is in dispute between the parties, or a province that is disaffected to the enemy. In general, however, the object will be to strike at the enemy's capital, or other vital point which he must defend, and thus to bring about a decisive battle. Given that such is the object, the plan of campaign will be determined almost entirely by the geography. In this is of course comprehended much that is the result of human action, the situation of towns, especially of fortresses, the lie of roads, which includes the bridges or fords by which they

cross rivers, and, during the operations themselves, the lines of trenches, if trench-warfare be the outcome. In a fairly level country towns and river-crossings will be the points of chief importance: the hills will probably signify but little strategically, though tactically they may be of great value to the defending side, in furnishing advantageous positions in which to await attack.

The strategy of the defence must for the sake of clearness be spoken of first. Even though the initiative is with the other side, the plan of the assailant cannot be formed except in reference to the fortresses and other defences of the country invaded. In a war of movement (and any war must begin as such) the defending army takes up whatever position is dictated by the circumstances of the case, military or political. Very probably, until the invader moves, it is widely dispersed so as to cover the whole of the assailable frontier, but prepared to concentrate as soon as his plan is disclosed. Certainly, it will be intended to concentrate in such a manner as, with or without the aid of fortresses, to bar the enemy's way to whatever are deemed vital points. The way may be barred in more than one fashion, if the geographical conditions permit. The obvious method is to await attack in a position directly closing the enemy's road; but it is also possible, by means of a fortress or perhaps of natural features of the country, to take up a position flanking the enemy's line of invasion. He must, unless he is overwhelmingly the stronger, turn aside to attack, under penalty of exposing himself most dangerously. It is, however, comparatively rarely that a position can be found rendering this method safe for the defending side, which will naturally be in most cases the weaker.

The extent of the initiative which the invader possesses is thus greatly limited. If there are two or three main routes by which he can cross the frontier, one or more may be rendered ineligible by geographical facts, or by the defences

organized beforehand. Assuming, however, that there is a choice, from the moment that he has made it his initiative amounts to little more than fixing his rate of advance. That is to say, strategically he must choose once for all, and thenceforward is committed to maintaining his line of communication, and to advancing in the direction which the enemy's retreat, if he does retreat, leaves open. Tactically, of course, he adopts what method he thinks fit for manœuvring the enemy out of a formidable position, or, if necessary, attacking him in it. One or two concrete instances will render these somewhat vague and general considerations more intelligible: all are taken from the Napoleonic wars.

When Napoleon resolved to attack Austria in 1805, the Austrian army, for political reasons, occupied Ulm, very far in advance of the frontier of Austria proper. This was a grand opportunity for Napoleon, who could dispose of enormously superior forces. Marching his army to the Danube by carefully combined movements, he succeeded in surrounding the Austrians at Ulm, and forcing them to surrender, after which the direct road to Vienna lay open. Had the disparity of force not existed, Napoleon must still have begun by attacking Ulm: he could not have risked invading Austria by any other route, with a considerable army based on a fortress ready to take him in flank or rear. The geographical position of Ulm determined absolutely how the aggressive campaign was to be conducted: Napoleon could hardly have wished it otherwise; but so in fact it was.

In 1815 the English and Prussian armies in Belgium, though superior, were for political reasons standing on the defensive. They therefore were spread out along nearly the whole frontier, until Napoleon disclosed his plan of attack. Even in that generally level country, thickly populated and with many roads, there were but few lines, practically only two, by which Napoleon could invade Belgium. Wellington and Blücher expected him, on the whole, by the route that

he actually selected, which was that giving him the best chance of success. They could not, however, take for granted that he would adopt it, and concentrate accordingly, without offering him a dangerous opening by the other route. The allies were therefore obliged to keep their forces more or less dispersed till the French attack began; and critics say that Wellington, at least, was unduly slow in concentrating. This however is a detail: the essential fact is that in the absence of fortresses, or natural features, to limit Napoleon's movements, he had a real choice of plans, and his enemies had to wait for his initiative.

When Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812, there were only two routes available: one through Prussia, crossing the frontier at Kowno and leading to Vilna, the other through Poland leading to Minsk. There were many other roads by which troops might and did march; but these two alone were fit for the vast transport of a large army. For many reasons the northern one was best suited for Napoleon's purpose, and he in fact adopted it for the bulk of his huge forces. The Russians could not put into the field, at the outset, much more than half his strength. They were bound for political reasons to occupy the frontier province as long as possible. Therefore they were also bound to retreat a long distance, before they could even concentrate, as soon as the invasion began. They had no fortresses worthy of the name which were concerned in the war, and fortresses would have been of little use had they existed. Napoleon with his great superiority of numbers could have spared troops to blockade them, and still combat the Russian armies on more than equal terms: and in that vast plain any place could be turned. The only essential thing for the invader was the use for his trains, not necessarily for his soldiers, of the main road he had selected.

Napoleon's belief at the outset was that if he could gain one great victory the Tzar would submit. His objective

therefore was not the capital, but the main Russian army; consequently he had to follow it wherever it might retreat. As a matter of fact the Russians, misjudging their true policy, had constructed a great intrenched camp at Drissa, low down the Dwina, and to it their largest army retired from about Vilna. Perceiving their mistake just in time, and finding that the second army, which had been guarding the frontier opposite Poland, was pushed so far south-eastwards that it could not reach Drissa, the first army abandoned Drissa, and marched up the Dwina to Vitepsk and thence to Smolensk, where the second army came in. Napoleon followed them all the way, without ever bringing them to a decisive action. Thus the geographical conditions practically transferred the initiative to the Russians, given that the invader was bent on fighting a great battle. They had only to continue retreating in the direction that suited them, and he must needs conform to their movements.

Another consideration which frequently governs the strategy of the defence is the position of rivers. No condition can be more favourable for prolonged resistance to invasion than the existence of a series of rivers cutting across the invader's natural line of advance. Each of them in succession protects the front of the defending army: the crossing of each in face of opposition presents a new problem for the enemy to solve. Permanent bridges can be destroyed, and though the enemy may construct new ones, this is a work of some difficulty in case of resistance. The tributaries which flow down in succession from the Alps into the Po, make of north Italy an ideal theatre of war from this point of view, provided that the combatants are facing east and west, as was the case many times over. The roughly parallel courses of the Oder, the Elbe, and the Weser have served in a similar manner, though less noticeably and less frequently. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of the importance of a river crossing the path of an army is furnished by the Berezina.

Napoleon, retreating from Moscow, had only that one river over which to force a passage. It is not too much to say that, but for misunderstanding and mismanagement on the part of the Russians, he must have failed utterly and been compelled to surrender. Even as it was, the relics of his army escaped as a mere mob of fugitives.

Rivers, whatever their direction, are of course likely to be important factors in the strategy of a campaign; but their effect varies indefinitely with the varying plans or strength of the combatants. Wars fought in the same region, between combatants who have the same frontier and the same general objects, will necessarily bear some little resemblance to one another. But unless rivers directly cross the combatants' line of operations, the resemblance is likely to be very slight. In 1809, as in 1805, Napoleon attacked the Austrians in the upper Danube basin, and in both cases he entered Vienna in triumph; but beyond that main fact there is little similarity between the two campaigns.

Circumstances varying so greatly, it is only possible to point out in a very general way the mode in which rivers affect a campaign. Several cases may however be mentioned.

1. An army moving up and down the course of a large river will have its flank very effectually protected, if it can move within a fairly short distance of the river. The enemy can only cross by bridges, that is to say only at known places if he has them in his possession, or by constructing bridges for himself, which cannot be done in a moment. Hence a sudden and unexpected flank attack is virtually impossible. Many wars exemplify the value of such protection: the most noteworthy instance is perhaps that furnished by Napoleon's defence of France in 1814; but it is at the same time the most complicated, because he was resisting two separate armies converging towards Paris.

2. Crossing a river in face of a reasonably strong enemy

always involves serious risk, though less in modern times, when such a movement can be covered with long-range artillery, than in the days when fighting was mostly hand to hand. In 1297, a large English army was sent across the Forth at Stirling by a single bridge, to attack Wallace posted on the hills beyond. Wallace was therefore given the opportunity of charging down, when part of his enemies had crossed the bridge, and could not be supported by the remainder, and inflicting on them a severe defeat. Napoleon in 1809, after failing to force a passage of the Danube at Aspern, waited until he had accumulated so many bridges that his troops could cross almost as freely as if no arm of the river had intervened. Thus he could not only bring his army in adequate concentration on to the field of Wagram: he also had full means of retreat in case the battle had gone against him.

3. It is proverbially dangerous to fight a battle with a river in rear. This self-evident truth need only be illustrated by the battle of Friedland, which was a crushing defeat for the Russians solely because Napoleon succeeded in cutting them off from the bridge in rear of their left, and so drove them against the river which they had crossed to attack him. A river, as has been said above, is a valuable protection to the flank of an army, whether on the march or in battle position. Circumstances, however, may arise such as to convert this protection into a cause of destruction. The Lancastrian army at Towton, having its left flank turned, was driven headlong into the river Cock, on which its right flank had rested. The French position at Blenheim was behind a small stream running about at right angles into the Danube. When Marlborough had broken through the French centre, the whole of their right was entrapped between his victorious troops and the Danube, and had to surrender or perish.

Ranges of mountains or of hills affect a campaign in

a somewhat similar manner. Their influence as frontiers has been already discussed: a few words only need be added as to the differences between them and rivers, regarded as obstacles to the movement of an army, or protection to its flank.

1. A range of hills that has to be crossed presents always the same amount of obstacle, unless a belligerent holds it long enough, and deems it worth while, to construct new roads—a very improbable contingency, though he will naturally repair damage done to roads by his retreating enemy. It is much more feasible to lay additional pontoon bridges over a river, so as to minimize its interference as an obstacle.

2. A range of hills, if taken as a line of defence, will naturally be used in the opposite way to a river. A defending army will take post not behind it, but on the slope or the summit, so as to compel the enemy to attack uphill, as Wellington, for instance, did at Busaco. Such a position has disadvantages, one of which is that little or nothing can in general be concealed from the enemy's observation. This, of course, applies to a hill or mountain range of some height, not to mere rising ground, which is an almost essential condition for a defensive position.

3. Mountains or hills screen the flank of a moving army from observation as well as from attack, unless the enemy succeeds, as is on the average probable, in reaching the top of the range and reconnoitring beyond. The movement of Surrey's troops, when he marched round to intercept James IV of Scotland encamped at Flodden, was made behind mere rising ground beyond a little river passable at many places, but it was not discovered by the Scots until too late. As protection to the flank of a stationary army, hills are effectual unless the enemy can establish himself on them, as he will naturally try to do. In that case they become a source of weakness, not of strength:

this, however, belongs to the department of tactics rather than of strategy.

When we come to dealing with tactics, geography—or, as it may be more appropriately called in this connexion, topography—enters into everything. Here again so much turns on detail, which is literally infinite in its variety, that only a few generalizations are possible, to which may be added two or three illustrations of the vitally important influence that may be exerted by topographical details.

1. The flatter a country is, the more difficult it is to discover an advantageous position for battle, that is to say, a position which gives the defender assistance in meeting a direct attack in front, and also such protection as will prevent his flanks from being readily turned. After Napoleon had reached Smolensk in 1812, the campaign resolved[1] itself into a retreat of a single army by the straight route to Moscow, followed by the invaders. The Russians, who intended to stand at bay sooner or later, retired on and on till their general could find a fairly good position. It was mainly the lack of such features in the topography that prevented the battle, which in fact took place at Borodino, from being fought much further west. For the same reason, Napoleon could easily have turned the Russian position at Borodino: he fought because he desired to do so, not because he could not advance without a battle.

2. What is, or is not, a favourable position is a matter depending entirely on the state of the art of war, on the character and range of the missiles in use, on the equipment of the troops, infantry or cavalry, that engage at close quarters. Harold's position at Hastings was excellent for its day, but it would have been quickly rendered untenable

[1] This, of course, refers only to Napoleon's immediate army and immediate antagonists, and leaves out of sight the operations on the very distant flanks.

by a cannonade from the higher ground opposite. The latest developments in war, the vastly increased range of artillery and rifle fire, and smokeless powder, give great advantage to the defence, provided that the country is of such formation that suitable positions can be found. In flat country, especially if there be many enclosures, these improvements tend to render war more difficult and uncertain than ever, though this is partially counteracted by one of the latest of all military devices, the use of balloons for reconnoitring.

3. The importance in war of small topographical details may be illustrated from almost every campaign, or even battle. The following are specimens, selected more or less at random, for the possible variety is so great that none can be fairly called types. When the allies attacked Napoleon at Dresden in 1813, they very naturally pushed their left down towards the Elbe, so as to cut Napoleon's line of communication with France. Unfortunately their staff did not know of, doubtless the maps in use did not indicate, a long and deep ravine, with sides so precipitous as to be totally impassable by troops. The consequence was that the left, when it had descended to the plain, was cut off from the rest by this ravine of Plauen, could not be reinforced, and was destroyed by the French. That is to say, this detail of the ground converted into a serious defeat what otherwise would have been no more than a failure to make much impression on Napoleon's defence.

Again, the battle of Maloyaroslavetz, which is often quoted as the turning-point of Napoleon's career, depended entirely on a fact of topography. When Napoleon was beginning his retreat from Moscow, he attempted to take a south-westerly direction, instead of following the straight route back. The Russian commander who first discovered this movement, and realized that it was essential to intercept it, saw that this could be done at Maloyaroslavetz, and nowhere

else. The advanced guard of the French had already occupied that village when it was attacked by the Russians. Reinforcements could only come over a single bridge, reached by a short slope commanded by Russian artillery. After a long and murderous struggle the French succeeded in driving off their immediate assailants, which compelled the withdrawal of the artillery: but by that time the whole Russian army was at hand, and the French were strategically defeated. In other words, all turned on the fact that the river to the north of the actual scene of combat flowed at the bottom of a deep trough.

An illustration, on a still smaller geographical scale, occurs in the last stage of the same retreat. Every gun and every waggon which the French had preserved so far had to be abandoned close to Vilna, because they could not be dragged up a trumpery little hill, the ground being frozen. Similarly, at Busaco, the existence of a small hollow, scooped out of the face of the slope which the French had to ascend, enabled Crawfurd's division to surprise with crushing effect the main French attack.

So vital indeed is geography, in full detail, to an understanding of war, that readers of military history need a special warning that maps, unless on the largest scale, may easily mislead them. Small variations of height, such as would hardly be shown on a map unless it were elaborately contoured, may have immense importance, as in the instances already cited. Again, on a map there will often be nothing to show the character of roads, whether they be well-constructed highways, or mere tracks. To quote one of the most famous, and most important, cases in point, critics are perhaps entitled to assert, from the map alone, that Grouchy could have saved Napoleon by 'marching to the cannon' of Waterloo. In reality, the ground being such as it was, with no made roads available, no exertions could have brought Grouchy to the field in time.

CHAPTER IX

OUTLINES OF EUROPE

[The two maps inserted in this chapter are identical so far as the physical features indicated are concerned.

In the first of them, Europe, so much of it as is shown, is divided according to the watersheds into the sections named in the text at p. 118. Such parts of the boundaries between these sections as are formed by real mountain chains are marked with a thick line: those parts which are formed by considerable hills, scarcely rising to mountains, are marked with a thick broken line: those parts which in nature are barely perceptible, or are purely conventional, are marked thinly. In two places, in Poland, and between Russia and the lower Danube basin, no boundary is marked at all. In the former case any line that might be selected, such as the almost nominal watershed between the Oder and Vistula, would mean nothing. In the latter case the accident that the Pruth flows into the delta of the Danube makes it impossible to draw a boundary line at all.

The second map gives the political divisions of Europe at the present time. Those parts of the political frontiers which coincide with watersheds, as shown in the other map, are marked with a thick line; the remainder thinly.

It can thus be seen at a glance to what extent the present political frontiers correspond with those which physical geography tends to suggest.]

This work does not pretend to attempt the impossible task of describing all the influence exerted by geographical

conditions on human history. All that it professes to do is to indicate the modes in which that influence works, with sufficient illustrations from actual history. For this purpose it is unnecessary to look far beyond the limits of Europe, of which the geography has been longest known. After all, it is on this stage that the greater part of the drama of history has been performed: and that history is known more continuously, and in fuller detail, than anything earlier. Vast as the interest is of the past of Egypt, and Assyria, and Palestine, we have not the materials to construct more than an outline narrative of events, rarely full enough to justify inferences on such matters as geography is concerned with. It may therefore suffice if we consider the map of Europe, as partitioned on physical principles, and then go on to compare this with the general distribution of races and languages, and with the existing political divisions.

The method most commonly adopted in describing a portion of the earth's surface, from the point of view of physical geography, is to take the river basins as units, the watersheds between them being the boundaries. This is thoroughly suitable for historical purposes: a river basin, as we have seen, tends to be occupied by a single race, a chain of mountains tends to be a barrier between races. At the same time, it must not be regarded as too important: some watersheds are barely perceptible, nearly all fail to keep races totally apart. Nor, of course, is it reasonable to make a distinct unit of each separate river basin, at any rate for historical purposes. Many are far too small: others are divided through a great part of their length by very slight watersheds. Nearly all rivers, as they approach the sea, flow through a certain distance of plain, and it becomes almost accidental whether two rivers unite, in which case one technically becomes a tributary of the other, or complete their course apart. No useful purpose in relation

to history could possibly be served, for instance, by treating the basins of the Tyne and the Wear as distinct units. No barriers that a traveller could discern separate, in the vast Russian plain, the streams that flow to the Black Sea from those that form the Volga and drain into the Caspian, or from those flowing into the Baltic. Still less is the boundary marked between, for instance, the Niemen and Dwina, or the Dniepr and Dniestr, which flow to the same sea. The Rhine and the Meuse unite in their common delta, the Po and the Adige do not. It would be obviously absurd, from the historical point of view, to attach any importance to cases like these.

The result is that, in dividing up Europe on physical principles into a series of sections, which shall have also some historical significance, one must finish off much of the delimitation arbitrarily. The sea-coasts alone are unmistakable. The mountain chains form excellent and obvious boundaries so far as they go, but they dwindle away to nothing in most cases before reaching the coast, or in some other way fail to furnish complete boundary lines. Like the bones in a skeleton, they do not quite reach the external surface, but they nevertheless furnish the solid framework for a map of the whole.

The British islands are the only section of Europe about whose natural boundaries there can be no question even of detail. The Spanish peninsula in the extreme south-west is almost as clearly defined by means of the chain of the Pyrenees, which forms its one land frontier. The Italian peninsula is similarly marked off by the Alps, though the conformation of the mountain chain prevents the frontier from being fully defined at either extremity. The Scandinavian peninsula is for practical purposes equally separate, though its line of junction with the Continent, in the far north, is marked by no natural feature. The Balkans run across the easternmost of the

three great Mediterranean peninsulas, and form a fairly clear boundary line between the southern or maritime portion and that which belongs to the Danube basin. The rest of Europe, however, the trunk to which these peninsulas may be regarded as limbs, is considerably less easy to partition in a similar manner, for the reasons already suggested.

The basins of the rivers flowing out of France to the English Channel and the Atlantic, the Seine, the Loire and the Garonne, form one natural section, of which the eastern boundary is clearly marked. A line drawn from Cape Grisnez, where the straits of Dover are narrowest, south-eastwards to the northern end of the Argonne hills, and thence in a southerly direction along the crest of the Argonne, Côte d'Or, and Cevennes, separates this region from the basins of the Rhine and Rhone. This is also roughly the eastern frontier of mediaeval France, except that most part of the small basin[1] of the Scheldt, north-east of this line drawn from Cape Grisnez, was under the suzerainty of France till the sixteenth century. In some parts, especially north and east of the Seine basin, the watershed consists merely of high ground; in others there are well-marked ranges of hills, some of which are not unworthy to be called mountains. Between the Cevennes, the highest and the southernmost of these, and the Pyrenees there is a wide gap, where nature draws no frontier. Nowhere, however, are these hills high enough or rugged enough to form a really serious barrier, and in most places they are no barrier at all. As a matter of fact, France has extended beyond them everywhere. Indeed, it would not be difficult

[1] The boundary might have been drawn east of the Scheldt, with rather less physical propriety, but with no practical difference. On the west of the Scheldt the watershed is clearly traceable, though never rising to serious hills; on the east the Scheldt basin merges in the delta of the Rhine and Meuse.

to arrange French history since the thirteenth century, when the process began, and therewith much of European history, as a record of the eastward expansion of France across these limits.

Between the Cevennes, with their northern continuations, and the western portion of the Alps is the basin of the Rhone, a well-marked unit from the point of view of physical geography, and in the early Middle Ages politically one[1], as the kingdom of Arles or Burgundy. The northern boundary, which separates it from the Rhine, is in most of its length very clearly defined by the Bernese Alps and the northern part of the Jura.

The western boundary of the Rhine basin has already been given by implication; it is the line of high ground (it is scarcely anywhere more) from which the Seine and its affluents descend. The Rhine and its first tributaries rise in the central Alps, draining some sixty miles of their northern face. A spur, running northwards from the main chain, separates the Rhine from the Inn and other tributaries of the Danube. This, gradually dwindling into mere hills, circles round the lake of Constance, and connects with the otherwise isolated mass of hill country called the Black Forest. In the eastern edge of the Black Forest rises the Danube, and close along its northern bank there is a chain of considerable hills, sometimes known as the Swabian Alps, which extends as far as the western corner of Bohemia. North of this is the basin of the Main, the chief eastern tributary of the Rhine. Another chain of hills running, at first north-westwards, from the same corner of Bohemia, separates the Main basin from the Weser and Elbe, and extends nearly to the right bank of the Rhine.

East of the lower Rhine begins the great plain of north

[1] The frontiers of this kingdom and of the Rhone basin were not identical, but they did not differ seriously.

Germany, traversed from south to north by successive rivers. At neither end has it any definite boundary. The watershed between the Rhine and the first independent river which flows parallel to it into the North Sea can of course be traced, but it is imperceptible on any but maps of the largest scale. Similarly on the east the plain extends unbroken to the Ural mountains. There is no physical reason why Germany should be made to end, and her eastern neighbours begin, at any particular line. The existing frontiers are, and any frontier in that quarter must be, the results of purely historical causes.

It has been said above that the hills forming the northern watershed of the upper Danube lie near the river as far as the western corner of Bohemia. The Danube passes at the southern corner through a magnified defile between the hills that enclose Bohemia and one of the eastern spurs of the Alps, giving a character of definitely marked separation to the upper Danube basin. Bohemia is in fact the key to the physical geography of all Europe north of the Alps. Roughly square in form, it has its angles towards the four principal points of the compass; and each of its sides is formed by a well-defined chain of mountains or hills, with only a single outlet for the whole of its river drainage. This outlet is at the northern angle, where the Elbe emerges on to the German plain. The principle most in favour with physical geographers, that of dividing up the earth's surface by the watersheds, would therefore make Bohemia belong to northern Europe. As a matter of history, it has always been closely connected with the regions to the south and east, and for good geographical reasons. The two northern sides of the square are real mountains, not rising to the level of perpetual snow, but sufficiently lofty and rugged to constitute definite obstacles to intercourse. And the defile through which the Elbe passes is not wide enough to neutralize the separating effect of the mountains on

either hand. The other two faces are, on the contrary, mere hills, through which roads can readily pass, especially the Mährenwald on the south-east.

A short line of hills connects the Riesengebirge, on the north-east of Bohemia, with the Carpathians, the most important mountain chain north of the Alps. The Carpathians start from near the Danube, some way east of Bohemia, and form more than a semi-circle, enclosing the Hungarian plain, and returning to the Danube again where it makes its final bend to the eastwards. The head of the Danube basin is, as has been said, separated from the upper Rhine by a spur from the Alps. That chain ceases to be single a little further east. The southernmost branch runs down the eastern shore of the Adriatic, and connects with the Balkan mountains. Between the other ranges, which spread out like a fan, rise the various tributaries that join the Danube on its southern bank, several of them uniting first into a single river. The whole of the Danube-land forms, of course, a single division of Europe, if we adopt the watersheds as the natural lines of partition: but it is in no way fitted to be a separate political unit, and has in fact never been such.

The largest of the sections into which Europe is divided physically is conveniently called by the name of Russia. From the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the coast of the North Sea to the Ural Mountains, extends a virtually unbroken plain. The western portion of this is north Germany, as already described, with no natural feature to mark it off from the larger portion on the east. Otherwise the boundaries of this vast region are, except in two or three places, very clearly defined by nature. The Arctic Ocean and Baltic form its northern limit, with an arbitrary line across Lapland from sea to sea. The Ural mountains lie on the east, with a gap between them and the Caspian. The chain of the Caucasus runs across from the Caspian to

the Black Sea. Finally the Carpathians divide Russia from the Danube basin, though here again there is a gap between the easternmost point of the curve described by the Carpathians and the Black Sea.

It thus appears that physical geography would divide Europe into the following sections:—

1. Spain. 2. Gaul[1]. 3. The British isles. 4. Rhone-land. 5. Rhine-land. 6. Italy. 7. Balkan-land. 8. Danube-land. 9. North Germany. 10. Russia. 11. Scandinavia. To these may with advantage be appended, 12. Bohemia, as easily distinguishable from 8 and 9, between which it is enclosed. It must, however, be borne in mind that the boundaries between several of these sections are not strongly marked by nature, and in a few instances are purely arbitrary. In the former class is nearly the whole eastern frontier of 2, a considerable part of that between 8 and 9, and small portions of others. In the latter class are the eastern and in some sense also the western frontier of north Germany.

It is of course not meant to be suggested that the foregoing division is in all respects such as ought to be adopted politically. Historically speaking, other considerations which come within the province of geography, though they do not exclusively belong to it, determine the boundaries of nations as much as the lines of the watersheds. Given races have in fact come to occupy given districts, the limits of which have been determined largely by physical facts, but partly also by influences which cannot be called geographical, such as the comparative energy exhibited by races

[1] This name is not perfectly apt, as Gaul in the Roman sense included more; but France has a much more definite meaning in modern ears. Nor is there any more inconvenience in using the term as a name for a well-marked geographical area somewhat less than the historical Gaul, than in using, as all the world does, the name Italy for a geographical area far larger than the original historical Italy.

which found themselves contiguous. It is unnecessary for geographical purposes to enter into questions as to how or why one race prevailed over another, even if it were easier than is in fact the case to discern the reasons why. But distinctions of race and language play so important a part in determining national frontiers, and generally in governing the whole course of history, that it is necessary to take a general survey of their distribution.

A preliminary question arises, which it is easier to ask than to answer, as to what is meant by race. Anthropologists have of late years laid great stress on the shape of the skull, and this is certainly the characteristic most readily observed in the remains unearthed from primitive burying-places. Colour is partially a result of climate, but only partially. Evidence of colour however is for obvious reasons little available; even the descriptions given of their barbarian neighbours by writers of civilized antiquity lack precision at best, and inspire little confidence in those who realize how vague were the terms denoting colour current in the ancient world. Language might seem a test; there is never a doubt as to the group, philologically speaking, to which a given tongue belongs. Historically however many peoples have changed their language, voluntarily or under coercion: and it would be a contradiction to say that they thereby changed their race.

The evidence available as to the inhabitants of Europe before the dawn of authentic history is not very extensive, proportionately to the length of time during which it is judged, from the earliest remains, that man has existed upon the earth. It seems sufficient to support the presumption—from the nature of the case it cannot amount to certainty—that traces have been found of all the races that have dwelt in Europe. For historical purposes the matter is not of great importance: if we can designate the peoples which inhabited the various regions at the period when some

definite knowledge begins, and can trace their subsequent movements, questions as to their ethnical affinities, however interesting, are not vital for the comprehension of history.

It has been very truly said that for races to remain separate a large amount of space is requisite. How the divergences in shape of skull and other physical features, or in type of language, were originally brought about, cannot be ascertained, and conjecture on the subject is little better than wasted labour. So long as population was very sparse, separate races, however they originated, might very easily remain apart. As soon however as numbers have grown somewhat, so that tribes come to be in more or less close contact, instead of being surrounded by large unpeopled lands, intermixture of race begins. Slave raids perhaps come first, but actual conquests soon follow. Men and women belonging to alien stocks begin to live side by side, and as soon as the repulsion towards all strangers, which seems to have been a general instinct with primitive man, has worn away, the two peoples blend. In historical times, individuals betake themselves for all manner of reasons to foreign lands, sometimes in large numbers, and are readily absorbed into the population. Thus in the modern world there is no such thing as a really pure race, at any rate among civilized mankind. What are called characteristics of race in features, colour, &c., are undoubtedly observable still. In a rough and general way it is true that a given race inhabits a given locality; but probably in the regions which are said to be most exclusively occupied by a particular race, there is not a single individual of literally unmixed descent. Fortunately for mankind, mixed races seem to be the strongest, mentally at any rate, and probably physically also.

History and geography are not therefore compelled, or even tempted, to take no account of race. With all the vagueness resulting from uncertainty and confusion of

theory, and from actual admixture, race is a real thing of which history must take cognizance. It is however permissible, if not necessary, in view of this vagueness, to lay stress upon language, which cannot in itself mislead, though the human beings speaking a given language may not be all of one descent. It is historically correct to speak of the Celtic race, for instance, as denoting all the peoples who talked the same or kindred languages, without inquiring whether they all had the same shape of skull.

The Old Testament affords ample evidence that the Jews absorbed foreigners, and that they did not consider themselves to be thereby destroying the separateness of the nation, to which they jealously clung. The fiction of adoption, which plays no small part in Roman law, reconciles the real fact of admixture of race with the theory that it is kept pure. Enough is discernible of conquests and immigrations, in ages of which no regular history exists, to make it certain that a considerable mixture must have taken place, practically everywhere, before the peoples from whom the modern world has been developed emerged into the light of history. The centuries that have since elapsed have continued the process of admixture, and yet racial types can be easily discerned still. History need not hesitate to accept as facts the various so-called races which are found inhabiting the world at a given period. If anthropology can class them, and disclose their affinities from a much more dim and distant past, so much the better: but it is not essential to history.

For the sake of clearness, it is best to begin with the state of things in the palmy days of the Roman empire, and this for more than one reason. So little is known of the lands outside the Mediterranean basin, which came to be included in the empire, before the date of their conquest, that only the most general statements can be made: anything more detailed must rest more or less on conjecture.

Moreover, the Roman dominion itself exercised a potent influence, both in transforming the language of many of its subjects, and generally in civilizing them, which meant fixing them in permanent habitations and putting an end to any nomad tendencies. The greater part also of the movements of peoples in the subsequent ages were rather conquests than migrations. The Teuton tribes that overran western and southern Europe added doubtless a new element to the population, but it was everywhere a minority which was eventually absorbed, adopting the language of the conquered. New ideas they doubtless brought in: feudalism, if not entirely Teutonic, was so partially, and representative institutions, with the other political ideas that had not descended from classical antiquity, grew up altogether among the Germanic peoples. These things however are not geographical.

The land frontier of the Roman empire in Europe may be taken, for the purpose of a general view of the geography, to have been the Rhine and the Danube. It is true that the Romans pushed a little way beyond the Rhine above the confluence of the Moselle, and also beyond the upper Danube about as far down as Ratisbon, covering this strip of territory with a defensive wall, after the fashion adopted by them in Britain to hold off the Picts: but this made no practical difference. A civilized state aiming at no further advance, and desiring only a frontier conveniently defensible against the barbarians beyond, the Romans deliberately selected the line of the great rivers, and except at the angle between them adhered to it. A river, however broad and deep, is no great obstacle to uncivilized tribes, provided that they have progressed so far as to construct boats, and that their movements are unopposed. It is obviously impossible, however, for such a people to cross a river in face of resistance from a disciplined army.

The Romans had ample motive for extending their sway

to the Danube, and not being content with the barrier of the Alps, in the fact that for centuries Italy had been liable to invasion by the wild tribes whose movements beyond the mountain chains could not be watched. Moreover Caesar in his conquest of Gaul had found himself involved with the Helvetii and other peoples dwelling north of the central Alps. West of the Rhine there was no great mountain range to serve as an alternative frontier. Nevertheless the Roman rule left comparatively little traces behind, either in the region between the Danube and the Alps, or on the left bank of the Rhine. There are towns which bear Roman names, and something of the Roman municipal institutions survived. To what extent the Roman language ever was current in these frontier districts, beyond the actual towns, we have no adequate data for judging. All that we can say for certain is that, not very long after the fall of the Western empire, these districts were inhabited by peoples probably altogether Teutonic in race, and certainly speaking a German tongue.

West of the Roman provinces along the left bank of the Rhine, which bore the significant titles of Germania Superior and Inferior, nearly the whole of Gaul, as well as of Spain, adopted the Roman language. Ethnologists differ as to the amount of non-Celtic elements in the population which Caesar subdued. There was certainly some Teutonic admixture on the east and north-east, though it may be difficult to determine with certainty how far into Roman Gaul it extended. There was certainly in the south another element, or perhaps two, probably pre-Celtic. The bulk, however, of the country to which the name of Gaul is given above for geographical convenience, the region whose rivers drain into the Atlantic and English Channel, was Celtic in race, and permanently adopted the language of their conquerors. The only district in Gaul where a Celtic tongue lingers is in the remote peninsula of Brittany, into

which, from its geographical position, the Roman influence would naturally have penetrated most slowly. Even here it is doubtful whether the assimilation by Rome was not completed: some ethnologists hold that Brittany owes its name, its language, and its distinctiveness of race to Celtic fugitives escaping from the Saxon conquest of Britain.

The case of Spain is somewhat similar. Ethnologists do not find the available evidence sufficient to decide with certainty whether the Iberians, who were undoubtedly the chief race in Spain, were or were not akin to the Celts. The extent and importance of the race which alone can be said definitely to survive, the men whose descendants still dwell in the western Pyrenees and speak the admittedly pre-Aryan Basque language, are also a matter of conjecture. At both ends of the Pyrenees the races dwelling on the south side seem to have spread northwards into Gaul: there is a little district in the south-western corner of France where Basque is still current. Generally speaking, however, in Spain, as in Gaul, the native peoples adopted the Latin language and civilization.

In Britain the evidence of language is clearer. The whole population was practically Celtic, of the Cymric branch in the portions which the Romans subdued, of the Gaelic in Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland that remained independent. Whatever prior inhabitants there may have been, they had blended peacefully with the Celts. The Roman occupation was not long enough or thorough enough to impose the Latin language on the people of Britain, though many Roman place-names survive, and Latin words were adopted into the Cymric language.

Beyond the Rhine and Danube, Teuton tribes were the immediate neighbours of the Roman empire, kindred of the inhabitants of the Roman provinces beyond the Alps and on the western bank of the Rhine. Roman armies

had penetrated among them, once at least with some success: but the great defeat of Varus in A.D. 9 had caused Augustus to lay down the rule, to which his successors on the whole adhered, that conquest further into Germany had better not be attempted. How far the Teutons extended, we cannot closely determine. The Slavs had followed them out of central Asia and entered eastern Europe: they apparently occupied the Russian plain, but there is nothing to show exactly how far their tribes extended along the Baltic. The Carpathians may be taken as indicating the limit beyond which the Slavs did not pass, till the movement of the Teuton tribes, falling upon the enfeebled Roman empire, left room for them in central Europe.

It is needless to trace in any detail the movements of the Teutonic peoples, who introduced a new element into the dying civilization of Roman Europe. Suevi and Visigoths, Franks, Ostrogoths, Lombards, they were all of the same kin. Some of them were already subjects of the empire, and filled the ranks of its armies. They knew its weakness and were tempted by its wealth. Naturally Italy was the chief centre of attraction: and most of the Teutonic races found their way into Italy at some time or another. The Ostrogoths under the great Theodoric set up a regular kingdom, which fell before the revived energies of the Eastern empire under Justinian. Then it was the turn of the Lombards, who again were conquered by the Franks, invited by the Popes. Long before this the Franks had overrun Gaul, except the south-west, where the Visigoths had already established themselves, and a great part of the lower Rhine-land. The Suevi and Visigoths occupied Spain, the Burgundians the Rhone basin. All alike came in as a conquering minority, bringing with them their own laws and customs. All alike were impressed by the superior civilization with which most of them had already some

acquaintance, and gradually blended with their new subjects. They learned Christianity, though much trouble arose out of some of them adopting the Arian form of it. Most of them learned the Latin language, or such debased form of it as was vernacular in the provinces of the now extinct empire.

Slav tribes moved into the regions left vacant by the migration of the Teutons southwards and westwards. Bohemia and the second Danube basin were filled by them. How far they advanced into what is now Germany is not quite certain; Slav place-names not far east of the Rhine indicate, unless there is error in the identification of them, at least a temporary occupation. For practical purposes, however, they retained no hold west of Bohemia; and they were driven back along the Baltic at a somewhat later date. The name of *mark* (boundary), given to Brandenburg and other districts between the Elbe and Oder, long survived as reminiscences of the machinery found necessary, in the days when Germany was first organized, to expel and hold at bay the comparatively barbarous Slavs.

The migrations of the Teutons, and of the Slavs in their rear, were confused and complicated by the great Hunnish inroad; but as they had begun before the Huns appeared on the scene, so they were continued after these formidable enemies had passed away. The devastating flood of savages, who under Attila threatened to submerge European civilization altogether, ebbed away without leaving behind any deposit of totally alien inhabitants. They destroyed much, and they broke up more: for they contributed towards driving the Teutons upon the Western empire, and they apparently helped to carry Slavs, whom they had subjected and uprooted, down into the regions north and east of the Adriatic. It is even suggested that pressure from the Huns set the Angles and Saxons upon migrating to Britain. Otherwise no account need be taken of them here; and it becomes

unnecessary to approach the disputed question of their race affinities. Certain it is that they were Turanian, if that word is still allowed to have any connotation. That is to say, they were connected in race, though possibly very remotely, with the Avars who invaded south-eastern Europe in the sixth century and like the Huns disappeared as a people, and with the Mongols of the thirteenth century, the last utter barbarians to devastate a large portion of Europe and vanish again.

Similarly, the Moors who conquered Spain, and were ultimately expelled, made no permanent impression. The monuments of their art are among the greatest treasures of Spain: some Arabic place-names have survived, and there are words of Arabic origin in the Spanish language, just as there must be some admixture of Moorish blood. Substantially, however, Spain is in race and language what the Moors found it, though common subjection to alien masters may well have hastened the fusion of the conquering Visigoths with the romanized Iberians.

In Britain alone the invading Teutons did not find a thoroughly romanized population; and they themselves were more completely untouched by Roman influences than any of their kindred. They occupied the southern and eastern parts of the island, exterminating or expelling thence the Celtic inhabitants; but they left the Celts in possession of the north and west.

Thus we find that, when the Teutonic migration has ended, Spain, Gaul (in the narrow sense), Italy, the Rhone-land, remain Roman in language, and in institutions also, except so far as the dominant Teutons had overruled them. The Rhine-land and the upper Danube, and the western part of north Germany, remain Teutonic in speech as in race, and the greater part of Celtic Britain has become Teuton also. In Scandinavia nothing has occurred to disturb the previous state of things: the people are

Teutonic, though possibly not of the nearest kindred to the Germans. The Balkan peninsula is growing more and more Greek in language and in sentiment, a process which became more marked and more rapid after the temporary dominions of the Eastern empire in Italy had been lost again. Finally, Slav races are in possession of the rest of Europe, except where the Finns remain isolated and of no historical account.

Two modifications, and two only, of the general distribution of races and languages have occurred since, if we except the gradual regaining of ground eastward by the Germans, which has already been referred to. The Magyar came out of central Asia, as the Huns had done before them, established their head quarters like them in the lower Danube basin, and like them spread terror and devastation further west. Instead however of disappearing like the Huns, they turned Christians and settled down to a permanent occupation of the land now called Hungary, reducing to subjection its Slav inhabitants. Later still the Ottoman Turks, kindred in origin to the Magyar, conquered piecemeal the relics of the Eastern empire, and established themselves as masters over the Greek and Slav peoples of the Balkan peninsula. The peculiarity about the Turks, due mainly to their religion, is that they never blended with their subjects. Christians and Turks live side by side, but remain separate; it is quite impossible to draw geographical frontiers dividing Greeks, Bulgarians, and Turks with anything like accuracy.

If we now compare the modern map with the physical divisions of Europe, and with the general distribution of races and languages, we shall be in a position to understand the extent and nature of the influence exerted by geography on the modern delimitations.

1. The natural frontier of Spain is now the political one: but within the peninsula there is the separate kingdom of Portugal, indistinguishable from Spain in race, differing from

it no more in language than sundry provinces of Spain differ from one another, and owing its political distinctness to historical causes only.

2. Modern France includes not only the whole of what is above called Gaul, but also most part of Rhone-land, and a large portion of the western side of Rhine-land.

3. Great Britain forms, as nature prescribes, a single political unit: Ireland conforms in so far as it is part of the Empire; but its political division is not dictated by physical geography.

4. The upper part of the basins of both Rhone and Rhine are united to form Switzerland, which also includes a small portion of geographical Italy.

5. The lower end of the Rhine basin is occupied by the two small states of Belgium and Holland.

6. Geographical Italy is politically one, save that Switzerland encroaches somewhat beyond the natural frontier on the north.

7. The Balkan-land is divided between three principal powers, excluding certain small territories. In the northwest, Yugo-Slavia represents the territory of the southern Slavs, and extends beyond Balkan limits into the portion of the mid-Danubian plain where Slavs predominate. In the south, Greece occupies her old peninsular territory, and extends her sway along the north Ægean coast-land, inhabited by an inextricably mixed population, where Rhodope provides, in part, a well-marked natural frontier. In the north-east, Bulgaria extends over the Maritsa basin, except its lowest part, and beyond it westward to the Vardar watershed, northward over the lower Danube foreland, and eastward to the Black Sea. In the west, Albania remains, in its mountain fastnesses, a congeries of tribes almost in primitive independence, and in the east, Turkey retains a scrap of territory from the Maritsa to her capital, Constantinople.

8. Austria is confined to the eastern Alps, with an ex-

tension across the Danube to include Vienna, a capital now of disproportionate size in comparison with its State.

9. Hungary is confined approximately to that (upper) part of the mid-Danubian plain which is peopled by the major definite body of Magyars.

10. Czecho-Slovakia includes Bohemia, with an extension eastward defined on the south, about Bratislava (Presburg) by the Danube, and on the north by the Carpathians, which have here assumed, since the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire, their natural function of a frontier range.

11. Roumania, however, bestrides the eastern Carpathian system, extending from the mid-Danubian plain to the Black Sea about the mouth of the river, and incidentally including within her boundaries a minor body of Magyars, the Szeklers of Transylvania.

12. Germany includes—

(*a*) the Rhine-land from the lake of Constance downwards, except the part belonging to France, and Belgium and Holland at its lower end;

(*b*) some portion of the upper Danube basin, i. e. as far south as the line of mountains between the Danube and its tributary the Inn, and as far eastwards as the junction of the Inn with the main river;

(*c*) the plain between the North Sea and Baltic and the central line of heights, out of which flow in succession the Ems, Weser, Elbe, Oder, and Vistula. On the east a detached portion of Germany extends far along the Baltic coast, while Poland projects westwards between this German territory (Prussia proper) and the Carpathians. The peninsula of Jutland, which projects northwards at the north-western corner of the plain, closing the mouth of the Baltic, belongs to the separate kingdom of Denmark.

13. The Scandinavian peninsula is entirely occupied by the two kingdoms of Sweden and Norway, one on each side of the central backbone of mountains.

14. Russia comprises all the great plain of which the limits have already been mentioned, with the exception of the Baltic and other minor states along her western margin. The fact that Russia has extended her sway far over Asia, across the Caucasus as well as beyond the Ural mountains and the Caspian, need not here be taken into account.

It will thus be seen to how large an extent the modern political divisions correspond with what geography would prescribe. To say that this is solely due to geographical influences would be historically false: there are too many and too obvious exceptions, though they are chiefly on a small scale, little more than deviations in detail from the ideal boundaries. Roughly speaking, and without taking heed to exceptions, the British islands, Spain, Italy, Russia, Sweden, and Norway have frontiers dictated by physical facts. France is in great part similarly bounded. East of Germany, the boundaries, marked by no physical features, are at least in part in fair accord with the other distinctions of which geography takes cognizance.

The tendency of the nineteenth century was towards the accretion of great nations, defined in some conformity with geographical principles. The absorption of small states by larger ones was a thing for many reasons sincerely to be deprecated. The settlements following the Great War created the three new independent states of Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, and Yugo-Slavia, in addition to those which formed or have attempted to form themselves upon the ruins of Russian imperialism. In some instances, such, for example, as the Polish 'corridor' to the Baltic shore, political considerations have overridden geographical; in others, as in the case of the northern Carpathians, physical geography has asserted itself.

CHAPTER X

THE BRITISH ISLANDS

The history of the British islands has been affected to an exceptional extent by geography—

1. (chief in importance) by their position on the globe—
2. by their physical structure—
3. (in modern times only) by their mineral products.

Foremost among their geographical advantages is the benefit derived from the Gulf Stream[1] Drift, from which the British islands derive a climate far milder and more equable than most countries in the same latitude. London is in the same isothermal line with New York, which is 10° further south, and with Peking, which is 12° further. Liverpool is almost in the same latitude with Danzig, and Glasgow with Riga. Where would be the trade of a country destined by position to be maritime, if the surrounding seas were ice-bound during half the year?

England lies at the north-western corner of Europe, its south-eastern angle within a few miles of the Continent, the distance widening along the south coast, and still more along the east coast, and the broad Atlantic lying outside the islands to the north and west. The straits of Dover were formed late in geological time: and there is evidence that Britain was inhabited by men while it was still joined to the Continent. Whether these primitive peoples died out entirely

[1] The tendency of writers on physical geography now is to minimize the importance of the Gulf Stream itself: but its name may serve as a symbol for the climatic influences of the northern Atlantic, to which Britain owes so much.

is a matter of conjecture; their successors must have come by sea, that is to say must have had the beginnings of civilization. The straits at their narrowest are far too wide to be crossed by people not yet civilized enough to construct and manage large and strong boats. On the other hand, the white cliffs of Dover are plainly visible from the opposite side of the straits, extending far enough to show that they belong to something larger than a mere islet. The British coast was near enough to tempt the adventurous, and to offer a welcome refuge to fugitives from the hostility of their stronger neighbours. In one way or another the islands came to be inhabited, not only Britain but Ireland, though nothing obviously can be determined about dates. The two islands are named by Aristotle; and long before his time Herodotus mentions islands at the extremity of Europe from which tin came, though there is considerable doubt whether the identification of these with Britain is correct. Except however these casual notices nothing is known of Britain until the epoch of the Roman conquest. At the time of Caesar's first invasion the island was already fairly well peopled by tribes mainly, if not entirely, Celtic [1], though not all of the same branch of that race—that is to say akin to their nearest neighbours on the continent of Europe, and carrying on some little intercourse with them. No sort of national unity existed: the coalitions of tribes to resist Roman conquest were but partial and temporary. The

[1] Ethnologists tend to support the opinion, which Tacitus mentions, that the Silures in south Wales were not Celtic but Iberian; and apparently the same race survived in the west of Ireland. There is however no evidence how they came there, and at any rate they were dominated by Celts, whose language they spoke. The name of the Belgae, a tribe found in southern Britain as well as in north-eastern Gaul, suggests the possibility that some of the Britons were of Teutonic origin. The Gallic Belgae seem to have been Teutons, or of mixed race; but this proves nothing definitely as to their namesakes. Moreover we know the names only in their Latin versions, and it is possible that the real names were accidentally similar, and not identical in origin.

Romans ruled Britain much as we rule India, as a distant dependency: very few of the dominant race made it their permanent home. Nevertheless there are marked traces of the insularity of Britain long before the Roman occupation came to an end. More than one Roman ruler acted with an independence which he would probably never have exhibited as a proconsul in Gaul or Spain.

During several centuries after the withdrawal of the Romans, Britain was almost as much exposed to invasions and raids as if there had been no protecting sea. The Angles and Saxons met with little effectual resistance. The Northmen, who ravaged all coasts alike, insular and continental, made a permanent settlement on the east side of the island. The Norman invasion succeeded, partly at least because England was not really united, in spite of having been long under a single king. Nevertheless, during all the period before the Norman conquest, England remained conspicuously aloof from the rest of Europe. There was a fair amount of intercourse, for commercial and other purposes; but the movements which profoundly affected continental Europe had little influence on this side of the Channel—a result to which the Channel itself mainly contributed. The establishment of the Western empire merely suggested to the Anglo-Saxon kings titles by which they could assert at once their own independence of the representative of Caesar, and their claim to rule their own little separate world. The supremacy of the Pope was recognized, as befitted a people who had received their Christianity from Rome, but the church in England went her own way. The accession of the Norman dynasty, possessing great territories on the Continent, necessarily brought England into closer touch with the rest of the western world: but this only made the effect of her insular position more remarkable. After the Conquest, as before it, England was mixed up in the affairs of the Continent as

much and as little as her rulers chose. Nay more, the separateness of England told upon her kings, aliens as they were in blood, making them identify themselves more and more with their island realm. Two centuries after the Conquest, Edward I, Norman or French by every strain of descent except that his ancestor in the fifth generation had married the Anglo-Scottish Matilda, was English to the backbone, and devoted his energies to the insular task of uniting Britain.

Other causes besides insular separateness no doubt contributed to preserve and develop in England the old Teutonic institutions, little affected by the feudalism of the Continent. The wisdom of William I and Henry II was necessary to build up on this foundation a system which welded England into a coherent nation, centuries before any nation worthy of the name existed on the Continent.

One of the measures most strongly tending towards national consolidation was dictated to Henry II by the insularity of England. The feudal principle, that vassals should in person serve the king in war for a fixed term of forty days, was unworkable when the royal summons called English vassals to serve on the Continent; the whole time might be expended in waiting for a wind favourable to crossing the Channel. Hence Henry established the system of scutage [1], of commuting personal service for money, with which the king could pay soldiers who might be engaged for any period necessary. It is easy to see how this tended to diminish the armed strength of the nobles, and to exalt the power of the crown, the representative of centralized national existence. Nor did much time elapse before conspicuous proof was given that the measures tending towards unity had borne fruit. Only in insular England could there have

[1] The principle of scutage was apparently not new, but it was Henry II who made it the permanent rule: obviously he could get no effective service from his insular vassals in any other way.

been seen the spectacle of all orders and classes uniting to extort from John the great Charter. Nowhere else could have been seen the national spirit which, almost as much as the tactics of the long-bow, her national weapon, gave England her first great triumphs on the battlefield.

The value of the 'silver streak,' as a defence for England against her enemies, scarcely needs demonstration in words. An island state cannot be invaded without all the elaborate preparations necessary for conducting a military expedition across the sea. Such a state is free from sudden attack, apart from aerial or maritime raids; and if she has developed maritime strength, such as England has for some centuries possessed, the task of invading becomes indefinitely difficult and hazardous. Apart however from this, an insular nation has some priceless advantages. Her frontiers are fixed by nature beyond all possibility of question. There can be no quarrels with neighbours arising out of disputes or encroachments on the common frontier. There can be no temptation on either side to aggression for the sake of obtaining a coveted bit of territory, or a more defensible boundary line. An insular nation has obviously to face the same difficulties which are involved in the invasion of an island, when making a military attack on another state, and is therefore altogether dependent on naval strength for effective aggression. This however is a very slight drawback to set against the security enjoyed through being 'compassed by the inviolate sea.'

Illustrations of these principles abound in English history. Since the Norman conquest, which was only rendered feasible by a great combination of circumstances favourable to the invader, no real invasion has taken place. Foreign troops have landed several times, but either they have made mere raids of no importance, or they have come on English invitation to take part in English civil conflict. The Dutch who landed with William of Orange merely served to render

irresistible the progress of the deliverer whom nearly all the nation was ready to welcome. The French who came to assist John's revolted subjects might have seen an equally easy transfer of the crown, but for the fortunate accident of John's death. Even in Ireland, only partially conquered or seething with rebellion, Spanish and French invaders could effect nothing. Louis XIV's projected invasion, to be made in support of an expelled legitimate king of England, whom a large section of the people regarded as still their rightful sovereign, collapsed utterly after the naval battle of La Hogue. Napoleon at the height of his power never ventured the stroke, which if successful would have made him master of the world. On the other hand England has carried on many wars beyond sea, most of which illustrate in one way or another the special conditions under which an island realm fights. These however have no relation to the geography of the British isles, and have been treated in another connexion.

The physical structure of Britain is of most importance in the second stage of its history, the period of the Anglo-Saxon conquest. If a line be drawn from the mouth of the Tees to the mouth of the Severn, and thence continued to the south coast, it will be found that it roughly divides the island into plain and hill regions. The country to the south and east of such a line is fairly level and almost everywhere fertile, exception being made for the fens and forests, which remained in primitive wildness till long after the Saxon conquest had been completed. On the other side of the line the country is mainly hilly, with a large proportion of land unfit for cultivation, at any rate until the growth of population rendered it worth while to utilize comparatively poor soil. Moreover, the greater the distance from the straits of Dover, the more uniformly hilly does the country become. Hence when the Angles and Saxons effected a lodgement in Britain, they gradually expelled the Celts

from all the south and east; but the hill regions of the west and north formed a refuge for the Celts, all the more effective because it was less attractive to the invaders, as well as more difficult to penetrate in face of resistance.

Unless the testimony of language is to be ignored, the same thing must have happened before, at the time of the Celtic immigration. If, as is at least possible, the islands were previously peopled by the Iberian race, they must have been driven by the Celts into the western regions, for it is there only that traces of them are believed to be recognizable. Moreover, the same process is more clearly discernible as between different sections of the Celts. Apparently the first settlements were made by tribes belonging to the Gaelic branch of the race, who retired into Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, as the Cymric tribes came treading on their heels. The latter all submitted to Roman rule, nominally if not completely: the former, protected by St. George's Channel and by the wildness of their mountains, retained their independence throughout the Roman period, and proved a scourge to their less warlike kinsmen when the protection of the Roman legions was withdrawn.

The Teutonic immigration was in itself largely governed by the geographical conditions. The first lodgement was made by the Jutes in Kent, the portion of the island nearest to the Continent. Successive swarms followed, of Saxons along the south coast, of Angles on the east coast northwards from the Thames: and geographical conditions may almost be said to have determined the fate of them all. Sussex, the earliest Saxon kingdom, being separated from Kent by Romney marsh, and shut in on the north by the vast forest of the Andredesweald, never included more than a strip of sea-coast. Its isolation is typified by the fact that heathenism is said to have survived

in Sussex when extinct everywhere else. The Angles of Norfolk and Suffolk, coalescing into one kingdom, were cut off from any advance westwards by the deep inlet of the fens, though they were open southwards to the little Saxon kingdom of Essex, which they ultimately absorbed. The West Saxons, beginning their inroad by Southampton Water, slowly spread northwards and westwards. On them devolved the largest share of the fighting against the Britons, whom they gradually drove across the Severn into Wales, or down into the hilly country of the south-west, then known as West Wales. On the northern section of the east coast the Angles had an easier task in taking possession of the whole strip of country between the Pennine hills and the sea, from the Humber on the south to the Forth on the north, ultimately forming a single kingdom of Northumbria. Finally, more Angles, landing in Lincolnshire, or making their way up the rivers which flow into the Wash and up the southern tributaries of the Humber, gradually occupied the centre of the island. Here again it was a geographical obstacle, the existence of the great forests then clothing much of the country, that long delayed the establishment of the single kingdom of Mercia. This latest formed of the so-called Heptarchy ultimately extended itself to very nearly the present frontier of Wales, including Chester and the immediate basin of the Severn, which had been for a time occupied by the West Saxons.

It will be seen by reference to a map of England under the Heptarchy, that the Angles and Saxons occupied but little beyond the line from the Tees to the Severn above referred to. From the open country they expelled their predecessors more or less completely. Opinions differ as to whether any appreciable number of the Celtic population remained, but at any rate they were merely as slaves. All the south-eastern section of the island was peopled substantially by Angles and Saxons; all the western hill

country remained exclusively Celtic. And the evidence seems to show that in Somerset and in the Severn basin, the borderlands to the districts of Welsh independence, there was a considerable mixture of population, the Saxons having conquered, but not exterminated or driven out, the prior inhabitants. This, it has been said, was because conversion to Christianity rendered them less ferocious; but it was obviously likely to happen for geographical reasons.

When at length the kings of Wessex had united all Anglo-Saxon England under their sceptre, the fusion of Angles and Saxons ought to have been easily accomplished. There was no geographical obstacle beyond the lack of facilities for intercourse, such as then hardly existed anywhere; they were very nearly akin in race, little distinguishable in language and institutions. The fusion was however indefinitely delayed by the advent of the Danes, who, beginning with mere pirate raids, became more and more permanent invaders. At first they landed anywhere, but gradually confined themselves to the east coast, where the fens gave access for their vessels of light draught to the very heart of the island. The country into which the Danes intruded themselves was, roughly speaking, that occupied by the Angles. Community of race soon did its natural work, and a fairly complete fusion of Angles and Danes seems to have resulted, the Saxons remaining more or less aloof. As at the beginning, so at the end of this period, the fens played their two-fold part. Hereward, the last leader to resist the Norman conquest, held out in the Ely fens, as Alfred had held out against the Danes, when his fortunes were at the lowest, in the isle of Athelney. It was through the fens that Sweyn of Denmark might have brought in assistance to his kindred, if he had not thought better of it. Charles Kingsley very appropriately closes his novel of *Hereward* with a chapter entitled 'How Deeping Fen was drained.'

The clearing away of fens and forests went on more slowly than the fusion of all the English races under common subjection to the Normans, aliens in speech and customs, though originally of the same stock. How far that community of blood operated to fuse Normans and English, shut up in the same island, how far that result was due to both races feeling that they were united by the accident of being ruled by alien Angevins, how far the administrative measures of Henry II did the work, is a matter of conjecture. Certainly all the various peoples that had established themselves in England were fairly blended together in sentiment, if not in blood, when they stood up against Henry II's son as a united nation.

The kings of Wessex, when their supremacy over the rest of Teutonic England was definitely acknowledged, began to claim, and in a shadowy way exercised, a supremacy over the whole island. The only effective extension of their territory was however through the complete conquest of West Wales, and of most part of the strip of land west of the Pennine hills, while on the other hand they lost the northern portion of Northumbria. Their Norman successors made a long step towards the conquest of Wales by building castles at intervals round the coast, on the comparatively level ground between the wild hills and the sea. They continued also the claim to titular supremacy over the northern portion of the island, besides beginning the conquest of Ireland.

Nature would seem to mark out Britain for the seat of a single nation, though three centuries elapsed before the task which Edward I just failed to accomplish was finally completed. If however the island is to be divided into a northern and a southern realm, geography indicates three different lines that might naturally serve as a frontier, all of which have some historical importance. These three are :—

1. The line joining the deep inlets of the Humber and Mersey.

2. The still shorter line joining the firths of Forth and Clyde.

3. Intermediate but not parallel, the line of the Cheviot hills.

The first of these apparently served as the boundary between two of the Roman administrative provinces, and was also, roughly, the frontier between Mercia and Northumbria. If the kingdom of Northumbria, then foremost in power, and on the whole in civilization also, had given in its ecclesiastical adherence to Iona rather than Canterbury at the eventful synod of Whitby in 664, it might very easily have followed that the island should be divided into two tolerably equal kingdoms, with consequences probably disastrous, in retarding the progress of both and delaying indefinitely the peaceful union of the whole.

The line from the Forth to the Clyde marks the limit of Roman occupation, and was protected by the wall of Antoninus against the incursions of the wild tribes to the north. The original Scotland lay to the north of this line, being in fact the Highlands only. If the Scottish kings had never extended their dominions further, it may safely be assumed that Scotland, like Wales, would have been conquered at a comparatively early date, and united to England.

It would be out of place to enter into the disputed question as to when, and under what conditions, these kings obtained possession of what is now called the lowlands of Scotland. Suffice it that they did acquire both the Cymric kingdom of Strathclyde, the country between the Clyde and the Solway, and also the northern portion of Angle Northumbria. Both of these were more really dependent on the English crown than Scotland proper, over which there was at most a merely formal superiority. Claims to the modern counties of Northumberland and

Cumberland, put forward by the Scottish kings, were successfully resisted by England. The first result was that the frontier was permanently fixed at the Cheviot hills, which from the point of view of purely physical geography is the most appropriate dividing line between north and south. The second result was that the Scottish kings came to identify themselves more and more with their Angle province, as being the most civilized, as well as the most fertile, portion of their realm. Into that province, which was in some sense under English supremacy, Normans penetrated after the Conquest, and gradually became a very important section of the Scottish nobility. The third result was an ever open dispute between the two crowns, which culminated under Edward I in a definite claim by him of full feudal overlordship, more than he was properly entitled to, and an equally definite and equally exaggerated claim on the part of Scotland to full independence. The result of Edward's premature attempt to unite the whole island was that after a long struggle Scottish independence was established, and also that Scottish patriotism became bitterly hostile to England. Happily the tendency towards union in course of time prevailed over the mischievous, though perfectly intelligible, alienation; and England, with the strength of Scotland added to, instead of subtracted from, her own, became one of the great powers of Europe.

Another point in the geography of the British islands is of great historical importance—Ireland, the smaller and much the poorer of the two, lies outside Britain, separated from it by an arm of the sea which in places is no wider than the straits of Dover. The dividing sea has doubtless contributed to keeping the people of Ireland much more apart from England in sentiment and character than the Scots.. This is however of trifling weight, compared to the relative position of the two islands. Ireland is too small and too poor to serve as the home of an independent

nation in the modern world. If Ireland had lain nearest to the Continent, it might have fallen under the control of France as easily as under England: at any rate it would have served as a bone of contention between the two. Situated as it is, Ireland could not but become politically united, in some shape or form, to the greater island. That there exists in fact so much hostility to England among the Irish people, is an unfortunate illustration of the power which sentiment can exert, to override the natural tendencies due to geographical and other considerations.

Before the discovery of America the situation of England at the extremity of the known world was not favourable for maritime commerce. The best market for the chief English product, wool, was as it happened close at hand in Flanders. The luxuries of the east came more easily from the markets of Bruges and Ghent, in exchange for English wool, than fetched in English ships by what was then a long and perilous voyage to the Mediterranean. Maritime the English always were, by virtue of their insular position, and no doubt also of their Viking blood. During the Middle Ages taken as a whole, England was by far the most real naval power outside the Mediterranean. A fantastic evidence of this was the claim, seriously maintained till late in the seventeenth century, to dominion over the seas around the British islands. It was a claim hard to enforce and useless for practical purposes, and merely led to trouble: but it could never have been made unless England had been accustomed to naval strength, and was by no means preposterous when Spain was claiming the whole world west of a given meridian of longitude by virtue of an award from the Pope, and all east of it, outside Europe, when she temporarily annexed Portugal.

Commercial greatness came later, after the discoveries of Columbus and Vasco de Gama had paved the way for the world-wide ocean commerce of our own age. It came

slowly, not without prolonged rivalry with the Dutch, who had been earlier in the field, and possessed much the same qualities, but who had the disadvantage of being a continental state, exposed to attack by land. It has often been pointed out that if the globe be so divided into hemispheres as to put the maximum of land into one and the maximum of sea into the other, London stands near the centre of the land hemisphere, yet with free access by sea to all parts of the world. Amsterdam obviously possesses very much the same advantages, save the invaluable security of being insular.

Neither geographical position nor the maritime aptitude of her people would however have given England her commercial supremacy, but for another consideration also geographical. England is fortunate in possessing vast mines of coal and iron in close proximity. When the working of these began in earnest, and extensive manufactures were consequently set on foot, the tide rose more rapidly than ever, and the preponderance of her maritime commerce was rendered complete by her undisputed naval supremacy during the wars of the French Revolution.

Another result of the same development of mineral wealth was a great shifting of the balance of population in England from south to north. For many centuries the line above taken as roughly dividing the plain from the hill region was also, as was natural, the boundary between the wealthier, more thickly populated and more progressive portion of England, and the poorer, scantier, and more backward portion. In the two chief civil conflicts of English history, the Wars of the Roses and the Great Rebellion, the geographical boundary between parties was roughly the same. And though in neither case was the party division purely geographical, yet in both victory remained with the side which was predominant in the south-east. Within the last century and a half this is greatly changed. Most of

the coal and iron, though not all, is found north and west of the above line, and therefore the great increase of population consequent on industrial prosperity has been mainly in the northern counties.

In order to trace adequately the influence of geography on English history, it is necessary to enter a little more into detail. The natural features which are of historical importance may be noticed in order from the south.

1. The existence of the Isle of Wight makes of Portsmouth and Southampton a pair of harbours easily protected against hostile attack, and possessing a double entrance or exit, east and west of the island, of immense value while ships were still dependent on the wind.

2. The length and depth of the Thames estuary has made London accessible to ships of very great size: it is also far enough inland to be fairly well situated for a capital. The French theorists, who upheld the ambition of France to extend her territories to the Rhine, were wont to argue that Paris was dangerously near the frontier, and that therefore aggrandizement eastward would be self-defence. *A fortiori* such writers would hold that London was a most unsuitable site for a capital. It has, however, stood the great practical test, and has in fact won its way to the foremost place against the competition of other cities officially favoured. York was the Roman administrative centre. Winchester was the original chief town of Wessex, and became the capital when the kings of Wessex at length made themselves supreme over all England. The later Anglo-Saxon kings did not always hold the meetings of the Witenagemot at the same place, but there was a distinct tendency towards regarding London as being formally, what it was practically, the chief city of the realm. This is typified in Edward the Confessor's foundation of Westminster Abbey, the national sanctuary of the English people, if any such exists. Since

the Norman conquest there has been no doubt about London being the capital. Administration, law, commerce, everything has gradually centred there; and modern facility of communication renders its exact distance from other places a matter of minor importance. At the same time, it is clear that the rise of the northern towns in wealth and population has deprived London of some of the overwhelming influence which it formerly exerted in the country.

3. The Severn makes an extremely deep inlet on the western side of the island, making land communication between Wales and the Devon peninsula very long and circuitous. Hence Gloucester, the lowest point at which the Severn could be bridged (until quite recently), has been a place of permanent importance in the military history of England. In the last campaign of the Wars of the Roses, Margaret of Anjou landed at Weymouth to support Warwick, who had chosen the Humber as bringing him nearest to his own possessions, and had advanced thence on London. Hearing of Warwick's defeat and death at Barnet, the queen and her advisers thought that their only hope was to make their way into Wales, which was strongly Lancastrian. Accordingly they marched northwards, while Edward IV moved from London to encounter them. Had Gloucester not been held by an adequate Yorkist garrison, Margaret could have reached Wales and prolonged the war. As she was obliged to push further north in order to cross the Severn, she was overtaken by Edward before she could cross the Avon at Tewkesbury, and her defeat there was final. Similarly in the Great Rebellion, Gloucester, garrisoned for the Parliament, kept apart Wales, the king's unfailing recruiting-ground, and the south-west, where also the royalist party was preponderant. So important was this felt to be that in 1643, when the king's cause was in the ascendant, Charles preferred besieging Gloucester to marching on London, the head quarters of his enemies.

They also felt its importance, and made an exceptional effort to raise the siege, the success of which is not unreasonably regarded as the turning-point of the war.

4. The Cheviots form along the Border a barrier by no means impassable, but high and continuous enough practically to force communication, friendly or hostile, between England and Scotland to pass through one or other of the gaps between the extremities of the Cheviots and the sea. Carlisle stands in the western gap, Berwick in the eastern and more important one. Hence the possession of Berwick was frequently and obstinately contested between the rival kingdoms, with the singular result that to this day it technically forms part of neither. It is not, however, the Cheviots only that define the two gates. North of them hills occupy a great part of Lothian, but leave a broad strip along the eastern coast, forming an easy route to Edinburgh. Hence at Dunbar, where this strip is narrowest, were fought two important battles. The earlier, in 1296, gave Scotland for the moment into the hands of Edward I. By Cromwell's great victory in 1650, Scotland was wellnigh conquered for the English Commonwealth. From the western end of the Cheviots the Pennine hills run southwards, forming a fairly continuous chain as far south as Derbyshire. These again are penetrable without great difficulty, especially in the southern portion; but still they formed a very real barrier between Angle and Celt, and obviously determine for a long distance the course of the main routes from England into Scotland. The space between the Pennines and the Irish Sea is not great: it is partly covered by hills stretching out towards the outlying group in the Cumbrian peninsula. Hence it offers a route far less convenient for military purposes than that on the east coast. Nevertheless, it has served four times for Scottish invasions of England, all of them in behalf of the Stuarts. Two ended ignominiously at Preston, where the estuary of the Ribble runs nearly up

to the hills. One led Charles II to his crushing defeat at Worcester. On the fourth occasion alone, when the young Pretender reached Derbyshire, was the invader able to effect an orderly retreat into Scotland. Not even the usually ill-advised partisans of the Stuarts would, however, have been likely to select this route as geographically preferable. It was chosen because they calculated, far too confidently as it turned out, on finding Lancashire and Cheshire favourable to the Stuart cause.

The main historical route between England and Scotland is that now followed by the London and North Eastern Railway. Crossing the Trent at Newark, it passes up the broad Ouse valley, in the centre of which stands York, having on the left a series of spurs from the Pennines. These enclose the Yorkshire dales, and the streams which descend from them unite to form the Yorkshire Ouse. Further north the route crosses the Tees at Darlington and the Wear at Durham, both at some distance from the sea, to Newcastle at the mouth of the Tyne. Thenceforward it follows the coast all the way to Berwick, and indeed to Edinburgh. Many places along this route mark the disastrous termination of Scottish invasions of England. At Northallerton, at the upper end of the Ouse valley, David I of Scotland received a sharp lesson against interfering in English domestic quarrels. This, however, did not deter his grandson from invading England to help the revolted vassals of Henry II, and falling into that king's hands at Alnwick. At Halidon Hill in 1333, a Scottish army, attempting to raise the siege of Berwick, was badly defeated by tactics very similar to those which, thirteen years later, won for Edward III his great victory at Crécy. At Nevill's Cross, close to Durham, another David, trying a diversion in favour of the French who had just lost Crécy, was defeated and taken prisoner. At Flodden, almost within sight of Berwick, James IV and his army were destroyed in

attempting the last invasion which was prompted by friendship with France. Finally, in 1644, a Scottish army in conjunction with the forces of the Parliament was besieging York, when Rupert came north to relieve it. The siege was raised, but the resulting battle of Marston Moor gave York and the whole north of England over to the Parliament.

5. The proximity of Ireland to the south-west of Scotland facilitated, if it did not occasion, the crossing over of the Scots into the regions hitherto occupied by the Picts only. By the same route came somewhat later the Irish monks, who established their head quarters at Iona, and thence sent out the missionaries who converted the northern half of Britain to Christianity.

6. The two deep inlets of the Forth and Clyde very nearly cut Scotland in half. Hence all military movements tend to centre round Stirling, which more or less commands the isthmus, for it is little more, between the two rivers. When Wallace, in 1297, raised Scotland against Edward I, his victory of Cambuskenneth, which gave him temporary control of the country, was fought on the banks of the Forth just outside Stirling. The defeat which in the next year closed his career was incurred at Falkirk, not many miles off. One of the young Pretender's battles was also fought near Falkirk, and one of Montrose's still nearer to Stirling in another direction. Most significant of all is Bruce's great victory at Bannockburn. So long as Stirling Castle was held for the English, he could not feel that he was secure in his kingdom, and he therefore made great efforts to reduce it. Edward II's expedition was made specifically to relieve Stirling, was defeated almost in sight of the castle, and by its failure virtually established Scottish independence.

7. The most salient feature in the geography of Ireland has also been of great importance historically. Ireland has been compared to a tea-tray, a rim of hills surrounding a

central plain, and the comparison is apt enough, if we add that a good many bits have been broken out of the rim. The largest gap is on the east coast, and thus invaders at all times, arriving by the natural route from the larger island, have found no physical obstacle to their spreading over the country. Nor did the hills furnish, like those of Wales and the Highlands, regions in which defeated earlier inhabitants could hold out against stronger invaders. We hear of small Norse settlements on the east coast, which must have been abandoned or absorbed. Otherwise, whatever early diversity of race there may have been, the Irish had apparently become homogeneous, so far as language and institutions afford a test, before the English conquest began. There is no marked antagonism traceable until Scotch Presbyterians were poured into the north-east some three centuries ago.

CHAPTER XI

FRANCE

It would be a gross exaggeration to attribute to geographical advantages the great part which France has always played in modern Europe. Much is certainly due to the qualities of the French people, and to a series of capable rulers, much also to the fortune which gave France the start as a strong and centralized despotism, at the time when the princes of Europe were all becoming despotic and striving after personal or dynastic aggrandizement. Nevertheless, the geographical conditions are such as to give France many advantages in her rivalry with other European nations. The soil of France is, on the whole, more fertile than that of any of her neighbours; and her mineral wealth, though not remarkable, is far from insignificant. Her position on the globe is the most favourable of any nation in Europe, except England with her insular security. Her northern shores are washed by that narrow sea which is incomparably the greatest highway of the world's commerce, now that commerce has become world-wide. Her western coast is open to the Atlantic; and on the south-east she touches the Mediterranean. She has an adequate supply of good harbours, and an extensive system of navigable rivers, of considerable value for inland trade. On the south and south-east she has mountain frontiers, affording ample protection, but not sufficing to bar, though they necessarily somewhat impede, peaceful intercourse and military aggres-

sion. Her frontiers on the east and north-east interpose no barrier against her flooding Europe with ideas or with armies. If we look at modern history as a whole, France has taken full advantage of her landward opportunities. Her favourable maritime position she has utilized to a far smaller extent, at any rate for commercial purposes: her fighting navy for some two centuries after the battle of La Hogue was second only to the English, though very recently other navies have been developing at a much faster rate.

The France of to-day comprises the whole of the region named Gaul in a previous chapter for convenience of nomenclature, the greater part of the Rhone-land, and a strip on the western edge of the Rhine-land. It is in the latter portion only that she has not a frontier which is well marked, in accord with differences of nationality, and reasonably adjusted to the rights and interests both of France and of her neighbours. And even the conventional frontier of the north-east is as fair to all parties, all things considered, as any other line in that quarter which diplomacy might select, there being in fact no natural feature of sufficient definiteness to serve as a real barrier, anywhere near the line where Celt and Teuton are in contact north of the Vosges. Nevertheless, a not uncommon, if extreme view used to hold it a grievance that the political area of France does not extend much further.

'The *région française*,' says Lavallée, 'which the ancients called Gaul, is bounded on the east by the Rhine, from its mouth to its source, and by the Alps from the St. Gotthard to the Mediterranean.' This claim to 'natural frontiers' was in part realized in 1919, but considered as a whole it does not enter into either the historical, or the present political, or the geographical purview. Historically, the whole of this region was never called by a single name, nor had the word 'Gaul' to the Romans any national significance, while its geographical meaning varied greatly. Caesar at the beginning

of his *Commentaries* truly says that Gaul was then divided into three parts, inhabited by peoples differing in laws, customs, and language. Whether the limits assigned by him to each people were accurate is, at least, doubtful. The Iberi, who, according to Caesar, dwelt south of the Garonne, extended further north at a later date, if not then. The frontier between the Celts and the Belgae, who were presumably, but not certainly, Teuton, or possibly of mixed race, must be drawn further to the north and east than the Marne. Substantially, however, Caesar's account is correct as to three very different peoples inhabiting the bulk of the region; nor did the official Gaul at any time under the Roman empire include nearly so much of the modern Switzerland as is reckoned by M. Lavallée to form part of his *région française*. Rome subdued Iberians, Celts, and Belgae alike, and introduced her own language and institutions, pretty completely among the two former, partially among the Belgae. Conformity to the laws and speech of foreign conquerors was a step, but only a step, towards ultimate fusion. Nothing approaching a Gallic nation was ever built up: when the Western empire perished, the invading Teutonic peoples conquered with little regard to Roman administrative provinces, but, as it happened, in some relation to the physical divisions. What is now called France has no connexion politically with Roman Gaul: it is essentially a modern growth, beginning to be real with the election of Hugh Capet, and only gradually forming a nationality, to which no small part of the inhabitants of M. Lavallée's *région française* have always been entirely alien, and at most times strongly antagonistic.

The region above named Gaul is the part of the country which was thoroughly romanized, and this in fact became the first historical France. The Frankish conquerors extended across the whole northern half of Roman Gaul, holding at the same time much German land to the east of it. When,

after a short time, their kingdom tended to be broken in half, the frontier line between Neustria and Austrasia corresponded pretty closely with the watershed between the Seine and Rhine river systems. Similarly, to the south of the Franks, the Visigoths in Aquitaine and the Burgundians in the Rhone basin were separated about the line of the Cevennes. Charlemagne's empire comprised all that is now France, and much besides; but so far as it had a basis of nationality it was Teuton, and the Celts of Gaul remained a subject race. It was at the partition between the grandsons of Charlemagne that the first step was taken towards the creation of modern France. The share of Charles, the youngest, was the fully romanized Gaul, extending in places a little east of the Cevennes-Côte d'Or-Argonne watershed, and it was over this region that Hugh Capet, after a century and a half, was chosen to reign.

The importance of Hugh Capet's election lies first in the fresh start made by a new race of kings, without the German affinities and imperial traditions of the Carolingian house. Almost more important is the fact that Paris, the centre of Hugh's own immediate domain, became the capital of the titular kingdom. Central it is not: French writers complain that Paris is dangerously near the eastern frontier, even now that France extends far beyond what Hugh Capet in theory reigned over; and the complaint did not fall far short of complete justification in 1914. But Paris is, at any rate, much more central than Laon, the capital of Hugh's predecessors, and it is in most respects excellently situated.

Feudalism had done its disintegrating work in most parts of what had been the Carolingian empire. Hugh Capet had a titular suzerainty over a multitude of vassals, some more powerful than himself. It was the task of his house to convert this into real sovereignty; and this had been fairly accomplished, with the one great exception of

Aquitaine, when St. Louis died, less than three centuries after the coronation of Hugh. Incidentally, moreover, the kings of Paris had in the same period fought out another conflict even more important to geographical unification, between the *langue d'oc* and the *langue d'oïl.*

The boundaries suggested by physical geography, it cannot be too often affirmed, affect the destinies of mankind but slightly unless they are real barriers. None such exists between the France of Hugh Capet's successors and the regions to the eastward, except so far as the Cevennes may be regarded as, at any rate, an obstacle. On the other hand no physical frontier of more than nominal character separates the region of the Garonne from the region of the Loire. Difference of race, however, did exist, the Garonne being Iberian and the Loire Celtic, though both had been saturated by Roman influences, and conquered by Teuton invaders, akin though distinct. How far this difference of race tended to produce a divergence in other respects can hardly be estimated: probably, the geographical fact that there is a wide gap between the Pyrenees and the southern end of the Cevennes had at least equal influence. At any rate, in the age when the modern Romance languages were coming into existence, through the corruption of Latin in the vernacular speech of separate regions, the language which formed itself in northern France was very different from that which simultaneously grew up in the south. And the south of the realm of France developed the same language as the region of the lower Rhone, or possibly borrowed it. The divergence in language between north and south was accompanied by equally marked differences in literature and ideas, in civilization generally. The south, as was natural, was in more or less close touch with Italy, the north rather with Germany. It was the good fortune of the kings of Paris that the whole south never became even as much consolidated as the north, before circumstances gave them the

opportunity of crushing for ever the separate civilization of the south. The counts of Toulouse, seated on the upper Garonne, extended their feudal superiority to the Mediterranean: if their dominions had been combined with Aquitaine, their technical vassalage to Paris, which sat very lightly upon them, might well have been repudiated altogether. It was a further stroke of good fortune that the counts of Toulouse gave the Popes a pretext for proclaiming a crusade against them, which was furnished mainly by the chivalry of northern France. The Albigensian crusade is chiefly known as the most atrocious of religious wars: it deserves to be also remembered as a great step in the unification of France.

After the Albigensian war began the series of piecemeal annexations in the Rhone-land, which only ended when Napoleon III took Savoy in 1860. In the break-up of Charlemagne's empire a separate kingdom had been formed, roughly[1] corresponding to the Rhone-land, which was called Burgundy after the Teutonic tribe which had overrun that section of the Roman empire, and had later been conquered by the Franks. This kingdom, after a separate existence of a century and a half, fell to the emperor Conrad II, and was thenceforth regarded as a fourth crown belonging to the emperor. With so distant a sovereign, the Rhone-land was especially liable to the fate of being divided up among a number of feudal princes virtually independent. Provence, the sea-coast district, was for a time united to Catalonia, and then to Aragon; and after many vicissitudes of no geographical significance, was left by the last independent ruler to Louis XI of France, the son of his father's sister.

[1] It is worth noting that the kingdom of Burgundy extended beyond the Alps, so as to include the Val d'Aosta. The Little St. Bernard pass, the earliest established route across the Alps, no doubt assisted this extension beyond the natural frontier, which in its turn facilitated the spread of the French language into Piedmont, and the ultimate union of Savoy and Piedmont under the same prince.

The dominions over which the counts of Toulouse were either direct rulers or suzerains filled the gap between the Cevennes and the Pyrenees, and these were the first to fall into the hands of the French kings. Other sections of the Rhone-land shared the same fate: the Empire was in no condition to defend its shadowy rights at so great a distance, especially when the annexations were made with the good-will of rulers, or people, or both. When once the possibility of a separate Provençal nationality had been destroyed, affinities of race and language were all favourable to union with France; and when the process had once begun, geography would naturally encourage going on as far as the Alps. French ambition in fact made many attempts to obtain a footing beyond them, which happily for the peace of Europe had never more than temporary success.

The consolidation of France within its original limits was not completed till long after she had begun to encroach on the Rhone basin. Many circumstances aided the steady policy of the kings, foremost among them the uninterrupted succession of son to father for over three centuries, which gave the crown a definitely hereditary character. The geographical distribution of the great fiefs was favourable to the kings' ambition: Paris lay nearly in the centre of them, so that their owners could not very easily unite against the king. One combination alone was so dangerous that it was a matter of life and death for the monarchy to break it up—the union of Normandy, Anjou, and Aquitaine in the hands of Henry II of England. It had been bad enough when the Norsemen settled down on the northern coast, and established their duchy across the Seine, the great highway of northern France. The Norman dukes had however been, on the whole, friendly to the kings at Paris until after their conquest of England, when they began to overshadow their suzerains. The marriage

of Henry I's daughter to the count of Anjou, and of their son to the heiress of Aquitaine, put into the possession of Henry II nearly the whole coast of France, and fully half of the territories then under French sovereignty. Fortunately for France, Henry II had scruples about bearing arms against his suzerain, and cherished schemes for gaining the French crown for his house by peaceful means, schemes that, happily for both France and England, were frustrated by his eldest son's death. Fortunately also, John's crimes gave the French king a pretext for declaring his fiefs forfeited, and his supineness allowed Anjou and Normandy to be wrested from him without a struggle.

The only geographical point connected with this period, which has a definite military interest, is in connexion with this French conquest of Normandy. Richard Cœur de Lion, foreseeing the probability of a French attack on the duchy, had built the fortress of Château Gaillard, admirably situated and excellently constructed, according to the methods of warfare then in vogue, to control the Seine valley above Rouen. If John had made a real effort to defend Château Gaillard, it would have saved Normandy for him; but even a masterpiece of military skill, as Château Gaillard was for its age, needs competent defence. As it was, John let his brother's great work fall into the enemy's hands, and with it the duchy.

When the thirteenth century ended, the effective dominions of the kings of France comprised most of the region assigned to Charles the Bald on the partition of Charlemagne's empire, save the south-west, still held by the kings of England. The opportunity of acquiring this also arose out of the first breach in the direct succession from Hugh Capet. Edward III, incensed at the persistent hostility of the first king of the new dynasty, set up a rival claim to the French crown; and the long wars which ensued ended in the loss of his French provinces. Edward

was, paradoxical as it may sound, defending the provincial independence of Aquitaine, which had never been under the immediate authority of the king of France, feudal superior though he was. Edward and his son were however, what Henry II had not been, foreigners in the eyes of the people of Aquitaine. They felt themselves nearer to France than to England, all the more now that the king of France ruled Languedoc. Original difference of race counted for little beside similarity of language and institutions, and geographical proximity unbroken by any natural barriers. They easily acquiesced in French domination; and in the second stage of the Hundred Years' war, when Henry V seemed likely to subdue all France, furnished steady support to the native king. The influence of difference of race, however, dies out but slowly. It was in the south-west that Protestantism found most support: the resistance of the Huguenots there to Richelieu was due to regard for their local liberties, as well as to fears for their freedom of worship. Even to this day the Gascon is recognized, in all French literature, as a very distinct type from the Parisian.

The course of the Hundred Years' war was not affected by the geography to a greater extent than all campaigns must be. Difficulty in seizing a passage across the Somme was felt both by Edward III before Crécy and by Henry V before Agincourt, though the campaigns, in spite of much superficial resemblance, were fundamentally different in design and conduct. The Black Prince's raid into the heart of France inevitably gave the king the opportunity of intercepting his return to Bordeaux; and though king John only partially achieved this, he succeeded in bringing about the decisive battle of Poitiers, which ended in his own total defeat and capture. The siege of Orleans, relieved by Joan of Arc, is often declared to have had great geographical importance. Orleans, it is said, was the key of the south:

the possession of it was essential to further conquest by the English, who already dominated the north. A glance at the map will show that it is truer to say that Orleans, situated at the northernmost point of the great curve of the Loire, threatened the heart of the English possessions. In truth, however, the importance of the siege was accidental: the somewhat unexpectedly prolonged resistance of the town gave Joan of Arc her opportunity, and her success was important, not so much as a military achievement, as in the domain of patriotic sentiment.

The Hundred Years' war is the stock instance for proving that a nation cannot be conquered if it is willing to pay the cost of resistance. This is doubtless true within limits—true, that is to say, provided that there is not too great disparity between the parties, and that the invaded country, through its size or its natural ruggedness or both, is practically impossible for the invader to occupy throughout. The Hundred Years' war is, however, not exactly a case in point. The English were not, strictly speaking, fighting to conquer France, but to enforce their king's claim to another realm. The French, who had in the exercise of their full right chosen a king whose title rested on a principle of succession different from that which Edward III invoked, had their patriotic feelings far more strongly roused than their enemies. England in the fourteenth century was probably richer than France, certainly possessed more national coherence, and was, thanks to the long-bow, definitely superior on the battlefield. Nevertheless it was a task beyond the strength of the English, even with the advantage of a footing in the south-west of France, to hold down a land much larger than their own, if the French kept up a diffused and obstinate resistance. The country was not like the Transvaal, exceptionally rough and intricate, so as to give special value to the natives' familiarity with the topography. But it was thickly sown with castles

large and small, every one of which, in French hands, was a centre of hostilities, while in English hands they were a perpetual mark for attack unless fully garrisoned. Moreover, everything that came from England had to be conveyed over sea, which necessarily limited the supply of men, and perhaps of other things. The ultimate result was to give France a much more thorough sense of national unity than she had ever had before, though purchased at the price of subjection to a virtually despotic monarchy; and to relieve England, at the cost of some humiliation, of the dangerous heritage of the Plantagenets.

France was thus, before the end of the fifteenth century, consolidated within the limits of Hugh Capet's realm, with small exceptions, of which Brittany, soon united to the crown by the marriage of Francis I[1] with the heiress, was the most important. The duchy of Burgundy had just fallen in to the crown for the second time by the death of Charles the Bold, and Louis XI did not repeat the mistake of his ancestor John in granting out the duchy afresh. France had also, before the close of the Middle Ages, made great progress in acquiring by various means the region of the lower Rhone. The rounding off of her Rhone territories by the conquest of the Saône basin was not achieved till late in the seventeenth century, though the way had been prepared since the end of the thirteenth. The watershed between the Seine and Rhone basins, though clearly enough marked, is no real barrier. Nor was it in fact ever the exact frontier of mediaeval France. The duchy of Burgundy, reckoned from the first as feudally vassal to France, always extended across the Côte d'Or: its very capital, Dijon, is situated on the Rhone side of it. Nothing was more natural, geographically, than that a close connexion should

[1] Louis XII, his predecessor, married Anne duchess of Brittany: but as they had no son, the kingdom and duchy would have been separated again, had not Francis I married their eldest daughter.

grow up between the duchy and the county of Burgundy, which occupied the rest of the Saône basin. The latter, though technically part of the Empire, was too far off to have any real connexion with it. Language and race attracted it rather towards France than towards Germany. Duchy and county came by intermarriage under the same ruler, though they separated again, the rules of inheritance being different. It is more than probable that if the heritage of Charles the Bold, other than his French duchy, had fallen into less powerful hands than those of the Hapsburgs, Franche Comté, the free county of Burgundy [1], would have been absorbed by France long before the peace of Nimeguen.

The extension of France into the Rhine-land was begun in the sixteenth century, continued in the seventeenth, and completed in the eighteenth, if we leave out of sight the ephemeral annexations made during the wars arising out of the French Revolution. In the nineteenth Germany won back by force of arms a large portion of what France had acquired; in the twentieth, this victory was reversed. These changes are, however, best treated in relation to the Rhine-land as a whole.

The frontier separating France from western Switzerland, the only section of the Rhone-land that she has not absorbed, is formed by the Jura, with a short arbitrary line drawn across to the Alps from the southern end of that chain. North of the Jura is again an opening, commonly known as the gap of Belfort, beyond which begins the line of the Vosges. These mountains are entirely included in the Rhine basin, their western slope being drained by its tributary, the Moselle. Nevertheless, the

[1] I have seen it gravely argued in print that the name 'Franche Comté' proves that this province naturally belongs to France. A grosser case of supporting by ridiculous arguments a contention not unreasonable in itself, can hardly be found. It is worth quoting as an instance of the crimes that can be committed in the name of geography or of etymology.

Vosges formed a more reasonable frontier line than the Argonne hills farther to the west, which are the watershed between the Seine and Rhine basins. They correspond much more nearly to the boundary line between the exclusive use of the French and the partial use of the German languages. Like the Jura, the Vosges are easily penetrable by roads, and therefore by armies, though they furnish a definite obstacle. Like the Jura, also, they are quite high and continuous enough to act as a real dividing line, keeping apart the peoples on the opposite sides, but by no means isolating them entirely.

From near the northern end of the Vosges, the frontier between France and Germany, fixed in 1870 by the resolution of Prussia in her hour of triumph, was purely arbitrary, designed to obtain possession of Metz for military reasons. Lorraine had long been partly French in speech, and partly German; but it cannot be truly said that this consideration, if worth anything, guided the amount of territory in that province which France was required to cede. The frontier between France and Belgium is still more arbitrary, for it does not even approach to coinciding with a division of languages. It represents the resultant of Louis XIV's conquests, of the diplomatic struggles in the peace negotiations that followed his wars, and of certain modifications similarly ensuing on the wars of the French Revolution.

Geography has greatly aided France in her gradual extension eastwards: it has been equally favourable to her internal development. France is not, like Spain, cut up by mountain ranges, impeding the intercourse of the regions lying between them, and retarding their political union. Her compact shape tends to prevent various parts of the country from being as strange to one another as are Naples and Piedmont. Her system of navigable rivers greatly facilitated internal trade in former ages, though in the modern world their importance has diminished. A de-

scription of the geography of France might indeed properly start from the four great rivers, each of course with its affluents. Their basins are, however, so slightly divided from one another that little in French history turns on the natural features of the country. Napoleon's defence of France in 1814 is in some sense an exception. That remarkable campaign is always quoted for the skilful use made by Napoleon of the converging courses of the Seine and its tributaries. Having two hostile armies to resist, he utilized from time to time one or other of the rivers to protect him against one enemy while he struck at the other. The interest of these operations is almost too technical for most readers: Sir Edward Hamley very reasonably calls them an illustration of 'the most complex problem which a theatre of war can present.' Moreover, it can hardly be said that the geography involved had any real effect on the history of France. Napoleon was perhaps able to make more effective use of his central position and undivided authority, than if the rivers had furnished a series of parallel lines for him to defend successively; but this only availed to retard somewhat the inevitable end.

Brittany is the only section of France of which the history has been separately influenced by its geography. That peninsula exhibits the one marked deviation from the otherwise compact shape of the country as a whole. The Breton peninsula has accordingly been always remote from the general life of France. Whether the Romans failed to assimilate it, or whether non-romanized Celts came back thither from beyond the Channel, is disputable. Certain it is that a Celtic language still survives in Brittany, and that the people retain a distinct character. They still, to a large extent, preserve the ideas and traditions of the past, from which France as a whole has departed—legitimism in politics and exclusive devotion to the Roman Catholic Church.

The towns of France, like those of other countries, owed

their growth very largely to geographical considerations. Their rise to some political importance, as in Germany, was due mainly to the deliberate policy of the kings in the days when they were feudal suzerains with little real power. Some of them have already been cited as instances of different classes of towns. Exact geographical position of towns has not however counted for much in French history. The most important exception is perhaps Rochelle, which became the Huguenot head quarters, and as such was besieged when Richelieu resolved to destroy the semi-independence enjoyed by the Huguenots. Then the isle of Rhé, which secures Rochelle as a port, gave a convenient landing-place for Buckingham's expedition in support of the Huguenots.

The importance of Paris becoming definitely the capital of France, when Hugh Capet was elected to the throne, has already been mentioned. Yet it was not the geographical position of Paris, admirable as that is, which made the difference. Many other towns, Orleans for instance, or Bourges, would at that juncture have served equally well. The essential condition was that the new capital should be thoroughly French, sufficiently far away from the Teuton frontier. The influence exerted by Paris over France as a whole is, and has been for some centuries, enormous. Not even London has been so completely the heart of a nation, and no other European capital is comparable even to London. This pre-eminence however is not really geographical, not so much so as in the case of London. The site was suitable for a capital, and in the capital the despotism of Richelieu and Louis XIV compelled everything to centre, with consequences which they certainly did not foresee. Whether it has been good for France, all things taken into account, that Paris should absorb so much of the national life, may well be doubted: but certainly the fact is unique in modern history.

CHAPTER XII

THE SPANISH PENINSULA

The points in the geography of the Spanish peninsula which are of historical importance are those most obviously visible on the map. Spain has sometimes been called 'the land of contrasts'; and certainly it would be hard to find a country in which some geographical influences had told so much on its history, while others were so visibly ineffective.

1. It has a land frontier as definite as any country in the world, in the chain of the Pyrenees. If nature can be said to have marked off any portion of the earth's surface as the home of a single nation, it has so marked off Spain. It was called by a single name in the days of Hannibal, and probably very long before. It was one under the Roman empire for several centuries; yet it has never been one since, except by force during some sixty years. The little kingdom of Portugal, originally one of several which formed themselves as the Christians gradually rose against Moorish dominion, has resisted the attraction which united all the rest, and even successfully reasserted its independence after having been for a time annexed to Spain. Moreover, in defiance of all geographical propriety it lies across two of the chief Spanish rivers, and has practically no frontiers that are not arbitrary. The fact that these rivers are not navigable within Spain, and that the Spaniards are not instinctively commercial, makes this interposition

of Portugal less injurious to Spain than it otherwise would have been. Nevertheless, Portugal is, to the eyes of geography, a standing anomaly.

Marked as is the northern frontier of Spain, and practically impassable except at the extremities, the political boundary rarely coincided with it until comparatively recently. The kingdom of the Visigoths in Spain extended along the coast as far as the Rhone. The Spanish march, which formed part of Charlemagne's empire, extended along the whole southern face of the Pyrenees, though the western portion appears to have been soon lost. The kings of Aragon acquired, by marriage and otherwise, considerable dominions in Languedoc; and though in 1258 all claim to most of these was surrendered in return for the abandonment by the French king of his pretensions to overlordship south of the Pyrenees, it was not until 1659 that Roussillon, the small triangular province abutting on the Mediterranean, was finally ceded to Louis XIV. Navarre, at the other end of the Pyrenees, acquired lands in the south-western corner of France early in the thirteenth century. From that time onwards a series of marriages connected Navarre more and more closely with France. Finally, by a strange anomaly, the titular king of Navarre succeeded to the French throne, and thereby united to France the fiefs north of the Pyrenees, nearly a century after the real, Spanish, Navarre had been annexed by Ferdinand the Catholic. Since the treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659 the frontier between France and Spain has been the natural one, though Napoleon, possibly in order to imitate Charlemagne in one more particular, contemplated in 1810–1 the annexation to France of the provinces along the Pyrenees.

2. The land frontier extends along less than half of the north of Spain, the western part being sea-coast. Thus the gate between France and Spain, at the south-eastern corner of the Bay of Biscay, is far east of the centre of

the country. Bayonne, the French fortress guarding the western end of the frontier, is very much nearer to Madrid than Perpignan, which corresponds to it at the eastern end, and is not farther from Paris. Hence, though both routes suffice for the passage of armies, and for commercial intercourse, the western one is for historical purposes the main entrance. By that way was poured into southern France the flood of Mohammedans whose progress was arrested by Charles Martel at the battle of Tours. In the passes of that neighbourhood occurred the conflicts with the Moors during the reign of Charlemagne, which form the historical basis for the romances of Roland and the paladins. Through that gate passed the still more destructive flood of French soldiers whom Napoleon poured into Spain. During the Peninsular war all communication between the main French armies and the head quarters of Napoleon in Paris went that way—reinforcements and supplies wanted in Spain, invalids and prisoners sent back, and dispatches going in both directions. Thus the task of the Spanish guerrilla bands in intercepting letters, rescuing prisoners, and generally harassing the invaders, was greatly facilitated, because everything was bound to travel by the one route. There were French armies in the north-east of Spain, which were on the whole successful, and pushed their conquests far down the coast. These operations, however, were of slight importance to the total result of the war, just because they were carried on in a corner. It did not really affect Wellington that the French took Valencia. When he had beaten the main army at Vittoria and forced it back into France, he was not deterred from following it because Suchet had still a fairly formidable army in the north-east of Spain. The south-western corner of France is indeed very defensible: the Bidassoa, which is for some miles the actual frontier, and the Nive and Nivelle north of it, form lines convenient to be held by an army on

the defensive; and Soult was able in 1813 to compel Wellington to expend much time, and a good many men, in forcing them one after the other. They form however no barrier against peaceful intercourse, though as the total volume of Spanish trade is not great, and is most of it sea-borne, the commerce into and out of Spain by land is of little importance.

3. The Spanish peninsula is effectively cut up by a series of mountain chains; and these hindrances to free intercourse have had their natural influence on the history. The Pyrenees are continued along the southern shore of the Bay of Biscay, leaving but a strip between them and the sea. After some distance they fan out, so that Galicia, the north-western corner of the peninsula, is more or less mountainous all over. The Ebro, rising some distance west of the entrance into France, drains the southern face of the Pyrenees, and flows into the Mediterranean. South of the Ebro, the Douro flows westwards, there being no very marked barrier between the two rivers in their upper course. Below the Douro a chain of mountains runs almost across the peninsula. Different portions bear different names, but the whole may be conveniently called by the name of the highest part, the Sierra de Guadarrama. Roughly parallel, at some distance to the south, is the still higher Sierra Morena. South of the Sierra de Guadarrama is the Tagus valley, while the Guadiana flows along the north of the Sierra Morena. These two rivers are further separated by a shorter and less important chain, while other mountains not very far from the east coast connect the two Sierras. South of the Sierra Morena is the fertile basin of the Guadalquivir, which, like the other great rivers, except the Ebro, flows westwards. Finally, along the south coast runs the Sierra Nevada, by far the loftiest range in Spain.

None of these mountain ranges, except the Sierra Nevada,

which is too close to the coast to be historically important, presents anything like an impassable barrier. They can be crossed almost anywhere, even in winter. They form however very serious obstacles to the movements of armies, and to free intercourse of all kinds. Moreover, all the centre of Spain is high above the sea, and, on the whole, arid and barren. This constitutes a further impediment to military operations, since armies must be supplied from a distance over difficult routes, very little food being procurable in the country except in a few localities. The importance of this obviously increases with the size of armies, as was amply shown in the Peninsular war.

4. The geographical features of Portugal, especially on the eastern frontier, also require some notice, because of their importance during the Peninsular war. The extreme north, beyond the Douro, is mountainous, and hardly distinguishable geographically from the adjacent portion of Spain, though the river Minho marks part of the frontier. The Douro during its course through Spain flows always westwards. Where it turns to the south-west it becomes the frontier between Spain and Portugal for about fifty miles: thence it flows again westwards across Portugal to the sea at Oporto. South of the Douro the frontier runs due south for nearly 200 miles, marked by no strong natural features, except that for a short distance it follows the Tagus, till it reaches the Guadiana. This river having flowed westward through Spain turns south near Badajos, and serves as the frontier nearly all the way thence to the sea, passing close to the western end of the Sierra Morena. Thus there are three main lines of communication between Spain and Portugal, corresponding to the three great rivers. The valley of the Tagus is however narrow, and in other ways ill suited for military movements. Hence the other two are practically of more importance, and on each the frontier is guarded by a pair of fortresses. Badajos is on

the Spanish side of the Guadiana, just where it becomes the frontier, with Elvas a few miles off in Portugal. Ciudad Rodrigo stands on the Agueda, a southern tributary of the Douro in Spain: Almeida is close to the Coa, a parallel tributary in Portugal. The other point to be noted is that the range of the Sierra de Guadarrama is extended far into Portugal, under the name of Serra da Estrella. It runs to the south-west for some eighty miles, and then terminates, leaving a broad strip of plain between it and the sea. Thus an invader of Portugal by way of the Douro basin, if he is aiming at the capital, has to choose between crossing the mountains into the basin of the Tagus, and moving on the north-west side of the Estrella, which is drained by the river Mondego.

It would be unreasonable to attribute to the dividing influence of the mountain chains the formation of the various separate kingdoms which filled the Peninsula in the Middle Ages. The Moorish invasion from the south had indeed been prevented from being complete by the western Pyrenees. The Christians maintained their independence there against the Moors, just as their ancestors had long done against the Romans. The Asturias, never conquered, was the nucleus of what gradually grew into the Spanish monarchy; but the small kingdoms which one by one established themselves in the north were in accordance with the political tendencies of the age, not yet ripe for great nations.

Geographical influences can, of course, be traced in many circumstances of the long struggle which ended in the expulsion of the Moors. Aragon, when once united to Catalonia, mostly limited its energies to the region outside the mountains which join the eastern ends of the Guadarrama and Morena chains. Castile, formed by aggregation of the small kingdoms of the north-west, had its limit at the Sierra de Guadarrama. Then it conquered the centre

of Spain, and the Sierra Morena became for a time the northern limit of the Moorish power. Nor did the union of Aragon and Castile by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella work easily, in spite of the ability and general success of those sovereigns. Indeed the separate feelings not of those peoples only, but of other parts of what in some sense was a single monarchy, notably Catalonia, were aptly symbolized in the official title of the realm—'las Españas,' not 'la España'—little as this was intended.

The war of the Spanish succession illustrates in a very marked way the tendency of portions of Spain to political separateness, in spite of their having been united for over two centuries under one crown. Castile, and the provinces which had a long and permanent connexion with Castile, having declared for the French candidate, Aragon, Valencia, and Catalonia declared for the Austrian, apparently for no stronger reason than opposition to Castile. The European war involved much greater issues than which of two princes should reign over Spain, and was fought out on other fields. The military operations within Spain were conducted with small armies, on no coherent plans, and often with little skill. Hence they are not worth following out: the significance of the geography can be much better seen in the Peninsular war, where it is not too much to say that geographical considerations dictated Wellington's whole plan of operations, and rendered feasible a task that in a level country would have been impossible.

It would be manifestly unreasonable to ascribe to geographical causes only the singular state of political feeling exhibited in Spain, when Napoleon substituted his puppet brother for the lawful king. Misgovernment, dating back to the forcible overthrow by the emperor Charles V of constitutional liberties in the several kingdoms, backwardness, intellectual as well as industrial, had tended to prevent the growth of any true national life, though the geography had

doubtless helped to retard progress. There was, in one sense, an intense national pride; every inhabitant of Spain felt himself insulted by having an upstart foreigner placed on the throne by foreign arms. The injury was common to all; but it would perhaps be no exaggeration to say that they felt it as Castilians, or Catalonians, or Asturians, rather than as Spaniards. A popular rising in Madrid did indeed give the signal for revolt everywhere, but it was merely the signal: the country was not really obeying an impulse from the capital, and was entirely uninfluenced by the fact that the French were able again to master Madrid. The little province of the Asturias, on its own separate account, declared war on Napoleon, and sent to England to negotiate for an alliance. Almost equally significant movements took place elsewhere. A self-appointed junta did indeed profess to govern Spain, but it was little more than a pretence. The various provinces resisted, usually with undaunted courage but miserable lack of skill; but each cared little, perhaps knew little, how the common cause fared in other localities. It was largely the fact that Spain was, so to speak, a low political organism, which made it impossible to conquer, while easy for the French to overrun. Victory in the field was easy, because the Spaniards lacked every requisite for military success, but victory led to nothing, for there were no vital points. Spain alone could probably never have expelled the French: for this the English assistance was necessary, which, in marked contrast to the incoherent struggles of the Spaniards, was conducted on a single definite plan, formed and worked by a single brain, and based on the peculiar conditions afforded by the geography.

The first intervention of England in the Peninsula was to send a force to Portugal in 1808, which, as a consequence of the victory of Vimiero, expelled the French from Portugal. From that time till the last stage of the war, Lisbon was continuously occupied by English troops, more or fewer,

and became the permanent base of operations for Wellington's army. Political reasons were doubtless predominant in inducing the English government to make Lisbon the starting-point for their efforts to liberate the Peninsula from Napoleon, and not Cadiz. Portugal was an ancient ally, almost a dependant, of England, and therefore deserved the first consideration. The royal family had fled to Brazil, and therefore it seemed comparatively easy, more so than it proved in practice, virtually to control the government of the country. Wellington did in fact succeed in obtaining supreme military authority in Portugal, though his difficulties as to supplies, &c., were endless. The Spanish generals proved absolutely worthless in co-operation, and their troops were of no service to Wellington till the last stage, when they had come directly under his command. Thus the political choice of Lisbon as a base was fully justified by the event. The military reasons for preferring Lisbon to Cadiz as a base were however at least equally strong, though they may not in fact have weighed as heavily. A glance at the map is sufficient to prove this. Wellington at Lisbon was on the flank of the French, who were trying to hold down all Spain. His advance into the heart of the peninsula would threaten to cut off all the French in the south from communication with France, except by a huge *détour* along the east coast. If he had made a similar advance from Cadiz, he could only have pushed the enemy back towards their base, while he would by every march be lengthening the distance from his own. The actual town of Cadiz was indeed easier to defend than Lisbon. Situated on an island, it is impregnable when held by a power that commands the sea. Lisbon, situated on a strip of land between the estuary of the Tagus and the sea, was not out of reach of hostile guns on the other bank of the river, but could be protected on this side by the English men-of-war. It needed the elaborate lines of

Torres Vedras, drawn across the whole tongue of land, to protect it against attack by land. When however these had been constructed, Lisbon was as safe as Cadiz, and in every other respect better suited for the English base.

Another point of almost equal importance was, that an army invading Spain from the side of Portugal had not to cross mountain chains. The great rivers flowing westwards, the obvious line of advance lay up one of them, in which case the ranges separating the river basins would serve rather as flank protections than as obstacles.

The general purpose of Wellington's operations was dictated to him by the leading political fact of the time. Napoleon's enormous power was based on force, and was exercised with gross tyranny outside France. Sooner or later the nations of Europe would combine against him, and would be inspirited to do so all the sooner if the war were kept alive in the Peninsula, draining his resources, and proving his armies not irresistible. It was the one field where English troops could be freely and effectively used against him: but England could not spare unlimited men for the purpose, and therefore Wellington must be cautious, running no avoidable risks, until the tide turned in his favour. Everything in his plan of campaign beyond this fundamental condition was based on the geography. The main points, as we have seen, were these:—

1. Lisbon formed a base of operations which could be rendered unassailable. To it England, having command of the sea, could send men and supplies without hindrance; from it, in case of need, Wellington could safely embark his army.

2. Being on the flank of Spain, he was in a position to threaten the enemy in an effective direction.

3. Spain being cut up by mountains, and in much of the centre barren and thinly populated, the enemy's armies could only move slowly and with difficulty. Large masses

could nowhere, except in Andalusia, be kept concentrated, for lack of subsistence; and Wellington could have no motive for entering Andalusia.

4. The distances between the French armies were great, and communications between them slow and uncertain, by reason of the natural difficulties of the country and lack of roads, besides the guerrilla activity of the Spaniards. Wellington could therefore be certain that nothing like accurate co-operation between hostile forces advancing from different quarters was to be apprehended.

5. There were three lines by which armies could pass between Portugal and Spain—those of the Douro, the Tagus, and the Guadiana. The central one was ill suited for the movement of a large army, being narrow and barren. On each of the others a pair of fortresses guarded the frontier. Unless at least one were in the hands of the enemy, invasion of Portugal by that line was scarcely feasible; and in the Douro region they were so situated that it was practically necessary for the invader to hold both.

Wellington's attitude being essentially defensive, his first business was to prepare all available means for holding out in Portugal. He knew that overwhelming numbers could theoretically be brought against him; but he knew also that large armies could not possibly be held together long, and that, consequently, delaying their advance would be almost equivalent to defeating them. He could see, also, that an army invading Portugal must enter by way of the Douro. Supplied, and in some sense directed, from France, it would add enormously to the length and difficulty of its communications if it attempted any other route. Even if the French had been undisputed masters of the south of Spain, this objection would have held good to some extent; but, in fact, Spanish resistance in Andalusia was never quelled: indeed in 1809, at the beginning of

the war, there were no French south of the Sierra Morena. Any attack therefore by way of the Guadiana could only be subsidiary; but the prospect of such an attack could not be ignored. Opportunities for aggressive movements, that should shake the French hold on Spain, might, or might not, offer themselves; when they did, Wellington would be in a favourable position for availing himself of them.

When Wellington landed in April, 1809, Marshal Soult was at Oporto with an army, occupying the north of Portugal, and threatening to advance southwards. It was important for many reasons to clear the country as far as possible of the enemy. He therefore immediately marched on Oporto, audaciously forced the passage of the Douro in face of Soult's army, and compelled him to retreat hastily over the mountains northwards. He could now organize the Portuguese soldiery, who only needed training and good leaders to become valuable troops, and could prepare the fortifications destined to protect Lisbon. For this purpose he selected the heights of Torres Vedras, which run across from the Tagus to the sea some twenty-five miles from Lisbon. These at once furnished a suitable position for defensive works, and enclosed ample space for Wellington's army in case of need. A similar line was prepared some miles further to the south, but was never in fact needed.

Unaware as yet of the untrustworthiness of the Spanish junta and generals, he attempted an invasion of Spain by way of the Tagus valley in co-operation with the Spanish armies. The move was premature, the co-operation illusory, and he was compelled to return into Portugal by French forces threatening to cut off his retreat. His victory of Talavera, the greatest yet won over a French army since Napoleon had become master of France, had immense effect in encouraging the British government and nation: otherwise all that he gained was experience, which

told him never again to co-operate with independent Spanish armies, and not to select the Tagus basin for a future advance into Spain.

What Wellington anticipated came to pass in 1810. Napoleon placed Massena at the head of an army far superior to Wellington's, and ordered him to drive the English into the sea. Wellington awaited him in the Douro region, and looked on while Massena besieged first Ciudad Rodrigo, which was still in Spanish hands, and then Almeida. Meanwhile he took measures, by breaking up roads and bridges, to render it very difficult for Massena to cross the mountains into the Tagus valley. He thus practically secured that the French advance would be by the line of the Mondego, and was able to call in the detachment which he had left to guard the Tagus approach to Lisbon, in time for the battle of Busaco. This action, fought in order to check the demoralizing effect of continued retreat on the Portuguese troops, and not on them only, affords an admirable illustration of the difference which good topographical knowledge makes in war. Wellington held a very strong position, which seemingly closed the way against Massena, and being attacked in it inflicted on the enemy a murderous repulse, with comparatively little loss to himself. All the while Massena, if he had known it in time, could have turned the position, though not so as to endanger Wellington's further retreat. By the time that the English army had been pushed back to Torres Vedras, it was nearly winter, and Massena, who saw that it was hopeless to assault the lines, was helpless to do anything. When spring returned he had no alternative, in default of very great reinforcements which did not appear, but to retreat by the way he had come. Wellington followed him, and it being important to his security to regain one of the protecting fortresses, fought the battle of Fuentes d'Oñoro to cover the siege of Almeida. The battle was

drawn, but for Wellington not to have been beaten was to gain his end. Meanwhile a subsidiary attack from the side of Andalusia had resulted in Badajos falling into the hands of the French, and remaining so, though they achieved no more, thanks to their defeat at Albuera.

With the year 1812, the tide turned in Wellington's favour, in consequence of Napoleon's Russian expedition. The geographical conditions now required Wellington, if he wished to assume the offensive, to capture the border fortresses. Almeida and Elvas were already in his hands; he besieged and stormed first Ciudad Rodrigo, and then Badajos, calculating with accuracy how much the flooded rivers would interfere with the march of the French armies that might try to raise the siege of Badajos, or retake Ciudad Rodrigo. He could not limit himself to one, because that would be to inform the enemy by which route he intended to enter Spain. He never, however, seems to have doubted that the Douro basin offered the greatest advantages, as leading straight on the main route from France to Madrid. Invasion in that quarter resulted in the victory of Salamanca, which opened the way to Madrid, and caused the French to evacuate the whole of the south. They were still numerous enough to compel him once more to retreat into Portugal; but the next spring, issuing once more by the Douro, he drove them out of the Peninsula.

CHAPTER XIII

ITALY

Italy is perhaps the country which best of all illustrates the worthlessness of historical inferences drawn from geographical facts hastily and without qualification. At the same time, its history, properly understood, displays very aptly both the effects of geography, and also the modes in which other influences overrule geographical ones.

From the first glance at the map it would seem as if Italy were specially and pre-eminently destined to be the seat of empire. Holding the central position in the Mediterranean, and possessing a great length of coast, with an adequate supply of harbours, she has the geographical requisites for a great naval power. Ringed round on the land side by the Alps, she would seem to be effectually protected against attack, provided that her own military resources are not utterly contemptible. Though the Appennines occupy no small portion of the land, the soil of other portions is exceptionally fertile: and the climate allows of a great variety of productions. Thus Italy is naturally capable of sustaining a fairly large population, though not a dense one: under the Roman empire the vast population of the capital, who were mostly non-producers, was fed with foreign corn. Mineral wealth she does not possess in any abundance, and therefore cannot advantageously maintain great manufactures; but this does not appear on the face of the map.

A little more careful study shows, however, that the chain

of the Alps is by no means so valuable a defence as (say) the Pyrenees to Spain. Moreover, though the maritime frontier of Italy is unmistakable, the geographical structure of the peninsula involves some drawbacks to national strength and unity, which are amply exemplified in the course of history.

Italy, it may be objected, was in fact the seat of empire for centuries, of the only empire which has ever included the whole civilized world of its epoch: if what has been can hardly recur, nevertheless Italy must be well suited by nature for political greatness, else the Roman empire could not have grown up there. Very little reading of history will, however, suffice to show that it was Rome which made Italy the seat of empire, not Italian geographical advantages. The genius of the Romans for war and government was doubtless aided to some slight extent by the central position of Italy; and the Latins, Samnites, and other peoples which Rome absorbed into her system, were more or less of kindred race, and imbibed the Roman spirit. Nevertheless it was the city, not the sea-and-mountain-girdled peninsula, that made herself mistress of the Mediterranean basin, and of much beyond it. Rome indeed succeeded too rapidly for Italy to have a chance of such consolidation as might have associated all Italy with the nascent empire. Rome was already mistress of nearly every country bordering on the Mediterranean, before the people of central Italy were admitted to Roman citizenship. Her dominion had extended much further before the franchise, now of little worth, was extended to all Italians. Valuable as were the legacies of Rome to her subjects, in systematic law and municipal institutions, she did nothing, and could be expected to do nothing, towards the moulding of nations. When the Roman empire at length broke to pieces, and not till then, the way was opened for the gradual evolution, out of the fragments, of nations in the modern sense; and Italy

was the country in which the process took longest to complete.

Indeed it is no paradox to say that the memory of the empire, whose centre was situated in Italy, militated greatly against Italy becoming a nation. The bishops of Rome owed their primacy in western Christendom to having their seat in the imperial city, from which the Caesars had migrated to Constantinople. In the dark ages of confusion, while the Byzantine emperors still retained nominal dominion, but little practical authority, over Italy, as over other remnants of the former universal empire, the Popes easily acquired their first territories. Thenceforth it was their settled policy to extend those territories, and render them virtually, and at last technically, independent of any emperor, eastern or western. Hence they were the active enemies of every power that seemed likely to dominate or to unite Italy. They called in the Franks against the Lombards: they leaned on the Normans of Sicily for support against the Germans who threatened to make the Western empire a reality: they called in the French against the latest Hohenstaufen, who had a chance of becoming sovereigns of the whole peninsula. Since Italian unity began to be more than an aspiration, they have been its irreconcilable enemies. The steady policy of the Popes has done much during many centuries to keep Italy fragmentary; but in so doing they have been greatly aided by geography.

Moreover the political traditions which survived the undisguised despotism of the later empire were largely of municipal self-government. The Italians, like their kindred the Greeks, developed as their political unit the single city with its adjacent territory. They might be ruled by kings or under some republican form: they might form federations: one city might become strong enough to subdue some of its neighbours. In all cases, however, their ideal of a civilized political community was one independent city.

The geographical formation of Greece greatly favoured the growth of such a system of small separate states, that of Italy in a less degree, but still to some extent. Anyhow the ideas and institutions belonging to them lived through the empire, and were practically the only ones surviving among the Italians after its fall. Through them became possible the greatness of Florence, and of the other city republics whose palmy days ended with the close of the Middle Ages.

'Italy,' said the Austrian Metternich contemptuously, while the map of Europe was being rearranged after the fall of Napoleon, 'Italy is a geographical expression.' In his day it had never been anything more: indeed in earlier times it had for centuries been much less, being merely a name given to a portion of the peninsula, divided by no marked geographical boundary from the rest. It was not until a generation ago that Italy became a real political unit, with frontiers corresponding in some sense, though by no means exactly, to those which physical geography would prescribe. Those frontiers are obviously the sea, and the chain of the Alps, which separates the peninsula from the rest of Europe. About the sea nothing need be said: the mountains however are much less simple.

The chain of the Alps does not start from the sea-coast on one side, returning to it again on the other, like the Pyrenees dividing France and Spain. Nor is it, like the Pyrenees, practically impassable, alike for commercial intercourse and for military aggression, except at the extremities. The Alps at their western end are continuous with the mountain chain which runs the whole length of the peninsula: thus there is an entrance into Italy, though a narrow one, without crossing the mountains at all. On the eastern side the opposite is the case: the mountains are continued down the eastern coast of the Adriatic. They are however in this part much lower, so that passage across them

has always been easy. Thus at neither end of the mountain frontier is there anything so definite as the two gates into Spain at the ends of the Pyrenees. Moreover in the main chain of the Alps there are a certain number of comparatively low passes. These are numerous enough to make Italy fairly accessible from the north and north-west, and yet few enough to attract attention to all. The Alpine passes and the history connected with them form the subject of a separate chapter; all that need be noted here is the fact of their existence.

The geography of Italy is best understood by starting from the southern extremity. All this part of the peninsula is more or less filled with mountains, which become a continuous chain in about the latitude of Rome, being there near the east coast. The chain follows, roughly speaking, the direction of the coast, which trends north-westwards to about north of Rome. Here the coast begins to run northwards, while the mountains cross the peninsula in a direction a little north of west, till they reach the west coast not far from Genoa. Thence they follow the coast line for many miles, leaving very little space between their base and the sea. Ultimately they recede gradually from the coast, and turn northwards, forming a high and definite barrier between the head of the Po and the lower valley of the Rhone.

The chain being continuous, the point at which it should cease to bear the name of Appennines, and be called the Alps, has to be determined arbitrarily, and geographers are not agreed on the subject. The furthest point eastward which could be selected is the Bocchetta pass (2,549 feet) due north of Genoa[1]. The furthest point to the west that could reasonably be taken is the Col di Tenda, situated just where the chain makes its great bend to the northwards. The latter is on the whole the fittest, on grounds both of

[1] This is the direct route from Genoa into the basin of the Po, though a contiguous pass has been used for the railway.

physical geography and of history. The mountains between these two passes, a distance of about seventy miles, are grassy rather than rocky, that is to say like in character to the Appennines; whereas from the Col di Tenda begins a series of rock and snow-peaks, with a much higher average elevation, belonging naturally to the Alps. Moreover the strip of coast between these mountains and the sea is inhabited by Italians: and the present frontier between France and Italy runs from the sea up to very near the Col di Tenda, and thence follows approximately the watershed of the Alps[1]. Napoleon, it is true, took as the point of division between Alps and Appennines the pass behind Savona, about halfway between the Bocchetta and the Col di Tenda, and sundry French and Italian writers have followed him. Napoleon's own practice however tells against his theory: his first independent campaign in 1796 began by moving up to this pass, and among the mountains to right and left of it. It is obvious that military operations in this region are more than likely to involve practically the whole distance from Genoa to the Var, and therefore it is unnatural, rather than convenient, to give separate names to two parts of a chain which has to be treated as a whole for military attack and defence.

From the Col di Tenda the general direction of the Alpine chain is northwards as far as Mont Blanc, a distance of about 135 miles. Separate sections of the chain are called by separate names, the dividing points being taken at well-known passes; but this is merely for convenience

[1] An amusing illustration of the mode in which frontiers are made to diverge for trifling reasons from the lines that physical geography would prescribe, is furnished by the piece of frontier between France and Italy. When the county of Nice was ceded to France in 1860, King Victor Emanuel was allowed to retain little bits of territory beyond the watershed, that were valuable for the sake of the chamois hunting which was his favourite sport, while there were other, equally insignificant, French encroachments on the Piedmontese side of the watershed.

of description, and involves no geographical principle. Mont Blanc (15,778 feet), the highest peak in the Alps, forms appropriately the corner at which the chain makes its great bend. Thence its direction is substantially eastwards, and again sections bear separate names.

Across the whole north of the Italian peninsula the main chain of the Alps forms a well-marked frontier, though as a matter of fact both Switzerland and Austria possess considerable districts south of the watershed. Not far from the longitude of Venice, the Alps separate into several diverging ranges, something like an outstretched hand. The southernmost of these, that which separates the valleys of the Drave and Save, tributaries of the Danube, from the rivers flowing into the Adriatic, must be regarded as the frontier of geographical Italy.

At both ends alike, a short line drawn from the crest of the mountains to the sea practically must complete the political frontier, and geography in its purely physical aspect cannot be invoked to determine what line is the most appropriate. Considerations of race and language may be adduced to support the claim of political Italy to a maximum of extension at both points. The practical importance of not having territories that it would be impossible to defend tells the other way, at any rate on the Adriatic. On the western side, the cession of the county of Nice in 1860 transferred to France a district which was mainly Italian in language, if not in race; and it was exacted by Napoleon III under circumstances which made all but zealous partisans of France regard it as injustice. On the other hand the mountains approach considerably nearer to the sea at the present frontier than further west, thus greatly shortening the arbitrary line. So again the eastern coast of the Adriatic for some distance is mainly inhabited by Italians; but such a strip of territory, if politically united to Italy, would obviously not be defensible against Austria.

Nor could Austria be reasonably expected to endure total exclusion from access to the sea. On the whole therefore the present boundary lines from the Alps to the sea may be considered as fairly satisfying the complicated conditions which determine a political frontier.

The Appennines separate the plain of the Po from peninsular Italy, as distinctly as the Alps separate it from central Europe. They are no actual barrier to intercourse, being nowhere impassable. Nevertheless they do form a natural boundary, though political divisions have by no means always followed the natural line. This is indicated by the established nomenclature: the name of Lombardy has been used in current language for the whole Po basin, or for the whole less the region of the upper Po, though it has never been the recognized appellation of a political division of anything like corresponding extent. The name of Tuscany has always been applied to the region between the Appennines and the western sea, though its southern frontier is not definitely marked by nature. In the ages when the Italian city republics were flourishing, we see that the Lombard and the Tuscan cities tend to form as it were distinct political systems: their special enmities and special alliances tend to be limited to neighbours on their own side of the Appennines, even while all are belonging to one or other of the great factions of Guelf and Ghibelline.

The river Po flows much nearer to the Appennines than to the Alps, especially in the middle part of its course. Thus it is on the north bank that there is ample room for military operations: it is the exception when armies move on the south bank, except to carry out some subsidiary purpose. Since the close of the Middle Ages the plain of the Po has been a standing battle-ground between France and Austria, the one entering Italy over the western Alps, the other over the eastern. Consequently the line of advance has been parallel with the course of the Po; and its northern

tributaries, joining it more or less at right angles, have furnished lines behind which armies stood on the defensive. The more important of these, taken in order from the west, are (1) the Sesia, which enters the Po some forty miles east of Turin. Very near the junction is Casale, a fortress that figures largely in the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (2) The Ticino, which flows out of Lago Maggiore. On its banks, a few miles from the Po, is Pavia, a town of some importance since the days of the Roman republic. (3) The Adda, which drains the lake of Como. (4) The Mincio, flowing out of the lake of Garda. This river has the fortress of Peschiera at its exit from the lake, and Mantua, the most important of all Lombard fortresses in modern history, close to its junction with the Po. Two other rivers, the Oglio and the Chiese, descend into the Po between the Adda and the Mincio, but they have not in fact proved of military importance. (5) The Adige, down which is the main route out of Germany. This river does not actually join the Po, but turns eastward and flows parallel with it into the Adriatic; for military operations, however, it must be reckoned with the other rivers which flow southwards out of the Alps. Just where the Adige emerges from the mountains stands Verona, now the chief fortress in northern Italy. The famous quadrilateral, within which an army has an almost unassailable position if they are duly fortified and garrisoned, consists of Verona, Legnago, a small place lower down the Adige, with Peschiera and Mantua on the Mincio.

The southern tributaries of the Po are of course comparatively small, and offer no great obstacle to armies except when in flood. The banks of one of them only, the Trebbia, which joins the Po just above Piacenza, have been the scene of important battles, fought under conditions totally different from those of the normal campaigns of Italian history.

The shape of the Italian peninsula has always been said to be unfavourable to national unity. It is extremely long in proportion to its width, the length being fully four times the greatest distance straight across from sea to sea. And this narrowness is increased by the Appennines, which run down the peninsula, splitting it into two unequal strips. That the separation thus created is real, at least to the imagination, is whimsically evidenced by the fact that the Italian railways are divided, contrary to all convenience, into the Adriatic system and the Tyrrhenian system. A practical weakness of a very real kind results to the kingdom of Italy from this conformation. The amount of coast to be defended in case of war is enormous, in proportion to the total surface of the country, and the distances over which troops would have to be concentrated to repel attack are therefore also great. Unless her fleet were as strong as that of any possible enemy, Italy could hardly spare a man for land warfare.

A glance at the map shows also that the peninsula trends greatly to the eastwards. Rome is in the same longitude as Venice, Otranto six degrees further east. The peninsular portion of Italy grows as it were out of the lower half of the Lombard plain. This fact is not without its historical importance, for it acted unfavourably to the French chance of dominating the peninsula. If France and Austria were contending in the plain of the Po, it is obvious that Austria would retain free access to central and southern Italy if she could maintain an equilibrium on the Adige, and could isolate any French army in the south if she were able to drive her enemy back to Piedmont. France on the other hand could not extend effective control over the peninsular portion of Italy, unless she had complete military superiority in the north.

The frontier of the former kingdom of Naples is marked by no distinct natural features, yet it remained virtually

unaltered from the first establishment of the kingdom until its disappearance in 1860. The Norman adventurers won it by the sword, but were greatly helped in retaining it by their agreeing to hold it as a fief from the Pope, who chose to assert a claim to suzerainty which had not a shadow of right in its favour, but was convenient as a stepping-stone to wider territorial supremacy. Northwards the kings of Naples could not advance, without encroaching on the territories of the Church, and in the later Middle Ages, when the Papacy was little save one of the five principal states included in Italy, the Popes were on the average quite as strong as Naples. The coasts of southern Italy were largely colonized by Greeks, who found there a people alien to the genuine Italians, who may perhaps have entered the peninsula by sea. Hence in the future kingdom of Naples, which included a considerable region inhabited by Oscan tribes more or less akin to the Latins, there was a great admixture of races from early times. Thus grew up a people differing in many ways from their northern neighbours, though divided from them by no barrier. Nor need it be doubted that the comparative narrowness of the frontier along which they were in contact assisted the other influences which have prevented a fusion.

Geography has obviously had great influence on Italian history. The number and position of the Alpine passes, the separateness of the Po basin, the long narrow form of the peninsula with its backbone of Appennines—all these things have been at work throughout. So also however the political influences already referred to, the early ideal of separate city republics and the anti-national policy of the Papacy, have operated during many centuries. All that we can say is that the history exhibits phenomena which accord perfectly with the geographical facts. The country continued all through the Middle Ages to be occupied by a number of small separate states, all the more jealously

hostile to each other because of their close proximity, and with a further disease of deadly feud arising out of the rival claims of Pope and Emperor, for which Italy served as a battle-ground. The country was rich in natural advantages of many kinds, and in the accumulation of wealth implied in its having been in the van of European civilization for nearly 2,000 years. It was also, as the seat of the Papacy, better known to foreigners than probably any other land. The people were too highly civilized to be warlike, too keen in their rivalries to coalesce against foreign intrusion. Warfare became the business chiefly of hired *condottieri*, and largely for this very reason nearly all the city republics came into the power of tyrants [1], whose selfish ambition perpetuated strife. Pan-Italian patriotism, if one may coin such a phrase, doubtless existed here and there: it may be traced in the policy of Pope Julius II, possibly in Caesar Borgia, and it was definitely taught by Machiavelli. Yet the unscrupulous ambition of the soldier-statesmen was far too conspicuous to allow any such dreams to attract others: it would be no great consolation to those whom they robbed or oppressed to be told that it was done for the furtherance of Italian unity. And Machiavelli's shameless advocacy of any means, however atrocious, for attaining political ends, was sufficient to obscure, at least, the fact that his aims were patriotic. Thus when foreign princes inherited claims on portions of Italy, there was no force in Italy itself capable of repelling them. Rather did the nearest enemies of the states immediately threatened welcome foreign assistance against them. The Alpine passes lay open to French and Germans, and the sea was open to the Spaniards when once they had established a footing. Domination in Italy became the prize for which foreigners contended on Italian soil. And so it continued

[1] In the Greek, not in the modern sense of the word; many of them were enlightened rulers as times went.

to be until our own day. The very title of kingdom of Italy [1] only dates from the year 1860, and the consolidation which made the name a reality is more recent still.

The conformation of the Po valley, with its tributaries, is the geographical fact which has most frequently influenced military events in Italy, at least in modern history. It was, as has been pointed out, an inevitable battle-ground between France and Austria, under the political conditions prevailing from the close of the Middle Ages till recently. A couple of instances will suffice to show how inevitably the tide of war ebbs and flows from one to another of the northern affluents of the Po. In 1796, when Napoleon forced himself between the Sardinians and Austrians on the Appennines, the latter naturally retreated eastwards. After reducing Sardinia to submission, Napoleon turned against the Austrians, who had complied with routine and taken up a position behind the Ticino. He however departed from routine, descended the right bank of the Po and seized a passage at Piacenza, thus turning the line of the Ticino. The Austrians had to retire behind the Adda, and on the French forcing a passage of that river at Lodi, made no attempt to stand anywhere east of the Mincio. Venice at that time possessed Lombardy as far westwards as the Adda, save the territory of Mantua, which was Austrian; and the Austrians had by treaty right of access to Mantua. The republic, fallen very low in energy and military strength, asked for nothing better than neutrality: Napoleon however contemptuously violated her neutrality, and the Austrians had to follow his example. The advantage in strength, as well as in skill, was now with Napoleon, and without serious fighting he succeeded in driving the enemy up into Tyrol,

[1] Napoleon no doubt called himself king of Italy, but it was a mere name; more than half of geographical Italy was annexed to France, or partitioned out among Napoleon's kin. The Carolingian kingdom of Italy was not quite so ephemeral as Napoleon's, but it was equally far from being national.

and seized Verona in defiance of Venetian protest. The Austrians had left a garrison in Mantua, which from its position environed by marshes was scarcely assailable, though like every fortress it was reducible by famine.

Thenceforward the campaign took a different character. The two armies are no longer facing east and west, divided by a tributary of the Po. Napoleon is in possession of the plain: the enemy must attack him by descending out of the Adige valley, and they can use any or all of several routes[1]. The primary object of the Austrians is to relieve Mantua: the French cannot feel themselves masters of Lombardy till they have taken it. The Austrian strategy is generally blamed as unskilful, because they divided up their forces so greatly that they were nowhere strong enough to achieve much. At any rate their operations illustrate the advantages of having several routes by which to advance, when the enemy cannot tell by which to expect attack. The first attempt was made by Marshal Wurmser, whose army descended to the plain in three divisions, west of the lake of Garda, immediately east of it, and by the Adige valley. Napoleon could only concentrate, raising the siege of Mantua. By so doing he was able to beat the three sections of the Austrian army in succession, but meanwhile Mantua had been re-supplied. A month later Napoleon thought fit to assume the offensive, and fought his way to Trent. Wurmser, taking advantage of the French being engaged in the Adige valley, crossed the pass eastwards from Trent to the head of the Brenta, and so had the way open to Mantua. Napoleon retrieved his mistake by following Wurmser, who turned to fight near Bassano, and being beaten had no choice but to force his way into Mantua. The second attempt therefore, like the first, ended in disaster to the Austrians, qualified by the garrison of Mantua being heavily reinforced.

[1] These routes are given in the next chapter; see pp. 208–9.

Later in October, General Alvinzi tried again: this time the bulk of the army descended on Bassano, while a minor force pushed the French down the Adige. Napoleon encountered Alvinzi at Bassano, and had the best of a rather undecided battle there, but thought it necessary to retreat on hearing of the defeat of his lieutenant in the Adige valley. Alvinzi advanced westwards to near Verona, but was not able to seize that city and join hands with the Austrians coming down the direct road. He defeated Napoleon's first attack on his position at Caldiero, and though in the desperate fighting known as the battle of Arcola, in which Napoleon aimed at turning his left, the French were on the whole victorious, Alvinzi might have held his ground but for the hesitation of his government. Alvinzi's second attempt, in January 1797, was geographically the converse of the first. His main army came down between the lake of Garda and the Adige, while a detachment moved via Bassano. The former was decisively defeated at Rivoli, after a battle which at one time looked like an Austrian victory, and Napoleon was just in time to prevent the other force from reaching Mantua, which soon afterwards capitulated. It required all Napoleon's skill, aided by sundry strokes of good luck, to foil all these successive attacks, facilitated and yet limited as they were by the various routes out of the mountains.

In 1799 the state of things was reversed: the French and Austrians at the beginning of the campaign faced each other on the Adige. Kray won a considerable battle at Magnano, and drove the French back to the Adda. There Suvorov, who had come into Italy just afterwards, defeated them again at Cassano, and ultimately drove them completely out of the basin of the Po; Moreau, who had succeeded to the command of the French, taking post along the Appennines as the Austrians had done at the beginning of 1796. Meanwhile Macdonald, who commanded the French

army that was upholding an ephemeral republic in Naples, had begun to retreat northwards on hearing the news of Magnano. It is obvious from the map that his communication with France, imperilled by the first defeat in Lombardy, hung on a thread when Moreau had fallen back to the Appennines. The most prudent course would have been for Moreau and Macdonald to unite south of the Appennines, and together attack the enemy in Piedmont or Lombardy. That which promised best if successful, but might entail great disaster, was for Macdonald to cross the mountains to the lower Po and attack Suvorov's rear, while Moreau faced him in front. The latter course was adopted; Macdonald, crossing to Bologna, moved westwards up the right bank of the Po. Suvorov met the danger promptly by concentrating his army and meeting Macdonald on the Trebbia. Here as the result of three days' hard fighting Macdonald was defeated, but escaped back across the Appennines, and the Austrians as the final result of the campaign remained in possession of the whole plain of the Po.

On the banks of the Trebbia occurred also Hannibal's first victory over a Roman army. The circumstances were of course entirely different. The great Carthaginian had just crossed the Alps, and after a slight encounter, in which one of the Roman consuls was wounded, found himself face to face with the other at the head of a considerable army. The Roman's business was to defeat Hannibal if possible, in which case his position would be desperate—at any rate, to prevent his further advance. The position on the Trebbia[1] enabled Sempronius to cover his lines of communication over the Appennines on Rome, and might have

[1] Livy, who is the only authority giving any details, places Sempronius on the left bank of the Trebbia, and Hannibal on the other, cutting him off from Rome; but this is inconsistent with what Livy himself records as happening after the battle, and may therefore be set down as one of the mistakes of that picturesque but ungeographical writer.

served to hold the enemy altogether in check. He was however enticed by Hannibal into an attack under very unfavourable conditions, and suffered a severe defeat. The interest of Hannibal's other great victories is topographical rather than geographical: indeed the topography of Cannae presents an interesting problem, of which the solution is hardly certain.

The majority of the chief towns of Italy owe their importance very largely to their geographical position, while one or two are conspicuous exceptions to the general rule that geographical considerations mainly determine which seats of human habitation shall grow to importance. It was inevitable that a large maritime town should grow up somewhere on the strip of coast between the Appennines and the western sea, which alone gives access to Italy without the necessity of crossing a mountain chain. That Genoa should be the place was decided by the two facts that it possesses a pretty good harbour, and that the easiest route across the Appennines into the basin of the Po starts from thence. Similarly Turin is on the upper Po, and is where nearly all the routes across the western Alps converge. As such it became a considerable town under the Roman empire, and in modern times it was the natural capital of Piedmont. For a united Italy separated from France by the frontier of the western Alps, one might reasonably expect that Turin would be the centre of military defence. It was a military post of great importance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the princes of Piedmont, being also dukes of Savoy, held both sides of the Alps for some distance, and sided alternately with France and with Austria. It is a marked illustration of the difficulty of defending a mountain frontier which, like the western Alps, has several reasonably easy routes across it, that the Italian government do not make Turin a great fortress. Presumably it is too near to the frontier, in view of these geographical conditions

and of the permanent military superiority of France. In case of a French invasion, which must be successful at some point or other, Turin might without much difficulty be taken in rear by the invaders, and in that case the resources accumulated there would be lost for active warfare. Alessandria, situated where the Bocchetta route from Genoa and the sea descends into the basin of the Po, was founded as a Guelf stronghold in a region then largely Ghibelline[1]. It stands on the Tanaro, one of the streams which may be said rather to form the Po by their union than to be tributary to it, and is near enough to the main course of the river to command it. Assuming that Piedmont is to be defended against France under modern conditions of warfare, it is the best available position for a great fortress and military centre. It was almost under the walls of Alessandria that the battle of Marengo was fought. A French garrison had been holding out desperately in Genoa, and Napoleon, having brought an army into Italy over the Great St. Bernard, and having entered Milan, moved westwards. Alessandria was the natural position for an Austrian army to take up, which held Piedmont, and wished to prevent the siege of Genoa being raised.

Pavia, near the junction of the Po and Ticino, was a place of great importance while Italy was cut up into city republics and other small states, but it has been of comparatively little account since the process of consolidation in Italy began. With the change in the political conditions its geographical position ceased to signify, and the place never had any other special advantages. Milan, on the contrary, has rather grown relatively to the neighbouring Lombard cities, and it is not easy to assign any other cause for this than what may be called the strictly conservative one. When a thing has once been solidly established, it

[1] It is called after Pope Alexander III, the implacable enemy of the emperor Frederick Barbarossa.

tends to continue by mere *vis inertiae*. When roads have been made to a town, and it has become a recognized centre of trade and other communication, it has good opportunities for strengthening its influence. And this especially holds good when a town has become, as Milan became, a capital even on a small scale. Otherwise Milan is very far from having any geographical advantages; it is indeed the most marked of all exceptions to the general rule that cities seldom rise to importance unless situated near the sea or on a fairly large river. Standing as it does in the midst of an open plain, it had obviously no means of defence save artificial ones, and in fact the walls of Milan were a very important factor in the wars that arose out of the question whether the mediaeval Emperors should be effective masters, or only nominal suzerains, over the Lombard cities. Of Mantua and Verona, which derived their importance largely from their position on the Mincio and Adige respectively, enough has been said already.

No very obvious reason can be assigned why Aquileia, situated some twenty miles inland from the head of the Adriatic, should have become the chief town of that region under the Roman empire. Venice, on the contrary, which practically succeeded to the place of Aquileia when destroyed by Attila, owed everything at the beginning to its being a safe refuge among the lagoons. Goths and Huns could not easily reach it, and in its humble condition did not probably care to try. As it grew in wealth it gradually extended its trade, and with trade its maritime power. The government of Venice was habitually prudent and sagacious, making the best of its opportunities, but it was geography which made Venice great. Situated at the head of the Adriatic, with reasonably easy land-routes away from it to east and north and north-west, it was the natural emporium for commerce between the east and Europe, if that commerce was sea-borne. And the lagoons protected Venice

in her golden days, as in her humble beginnings, from hostile neighbours on the land side, until the fatal ambition seized on the republic of herself owning territories on the mainland. Thenceforth Venice was vulnerable, and owed her continuance of power rather to skilful policy, and to her potential enemies having other objects in view, than to her geographical position. One way or another, she continued to exist as an independent city republic, but to sink lower and lower in corruption, until she perished ignominiously, not daring to strike a blow in her own defence.

Of Bologna nothing need be said save that it stands on the northern side of a frequented pass across the Appennines. Florence is an instance of other factors outweighing geography. Pisa, situated on the same river, but much nearer the sea, ought geographically to have surpassed Florence, which has no advantages of position over scores of other Italian cities, not even defensibility. It was the energy of the Florentine people which raised their city to the front rank, foremost among Italian republics in political eminence as well as in arts and letters.

More than one of the famous seven hills of Rome were doubtless originally the sites of hill forts, the commonest of all origins for primitive towns, and these separate settlements coalesced into one, as is indicated in the early Roman legends. When this had once taken place, the situation was eminently favourable for the growth of Rome to importance among the small town communities of that age. Rome stood near the meeting-point of several races, and thus was a convenient centre of trade. Moreover it was obviously possible for Rome to play off one against the other, and so steadily increase in strength; and it requires no forced interpretation of the early and admittedly more or less fabulous history to discern that this in fact took place. Nor can it be doubted that the central position of Rome in Italy and in the Mediterranean assisted her rise to universal

empire, even though that rise was mainly due to other causes. From the modern point of view however, in a kingdom of Italy extending approximately to its natural limits but possessing no external dominion, Rome has hardly any geographical advantages. It is because of the traditions of empire, not from natural selection, that Rome is the capital of a kingdom in which she is not the greatest town, apart from sentiment.

The Greek cities round the coast of south Italy, founded at an early date before the Italian towns properly so called had begun to rise, developed a mushroom growth of material prosperity, and perished, partly at least through the luxury and corruption engendered of their wealth. One alone of the Greek cities remains a large place, there being no apparent reason why it should have done so. Geography at least fails to explain why Naples survived the rest, or why it should have been more than twice as populous as any other Italian city, until very recent times. The establishment of Rome as the capital of united Italy has naturally led to the concentration of much national business there, and therefore to a great increase of its population. Yet in spite of this Rome still is considerably behind Naples in the number of its inhabitants.

[The north-east Italian frontier in its relation to the Great War will be referred to in a later chapter.—ED.]

CHAPTER XIV

THE ALPINE PASSES AND THEIR HISTORY

The chief reason why the history of Italy has diverged so widely from what its geography at first sight would suggest as probable, is the existence of the Alpine passes. There are of course many hundreds of what a mountaineer calls passes, depressions over which a properly equipped party can make their way. The vast majority of these are naturally of no practical importance. Armies cannot use them: traffic over them is impossible. At the utmost some of them may serve, as in the Pyrenees, for a smuggling trade, but even this disappears when the profits of smuggling cease to be great. There are however an appreciable number of gaps in the chain, by which there was never any real difficulty for travellers on foot or with laden animals, over which in modern times good carriage roads have been made. These gaps occur at fairly long intervals, and in all parts of the Alps: a brief mention of the more important among them is necessary if we would see how they have affected history.

The Alps begin and the Appennines end, as has been said in the last chapter, at the Col di Tenda (6,158 feet), which is nearly in a straight line between Nice and Turin. This pass is easier than some of the more frequented passes to the north of it; but it is obviously valuable only for local traffic. The commerce of Marseilles with Italy would naturally be carried on by sea; and for inland trade

between France and Italy the Col di Tenda would be absurdly circuitous. Nor is its position more suitable for military purposes, unless under exceptional conditions such as prevailed in 1796 and 1800, when any of the routes from the coast into the basin of the Po might have come into the operations. A French invasion of Italy could not select a more inconvenient route: an Italian invasion of France by the Col di Tenda would lead only into an isolated corner. Hence it is no wonder that it has in fact very little historical importance.

The maritime Alps are considered to extend from the Col di Tenda to the Col de l'Argentière (6,545 feet). This is partly open to the same objections as the last named pass, since it leads into the valley of the Durance, which joins the Rhone very low down; but it is exceptionally easy in its slopes, an advantage which may have led to its being adopted by armies that otherwise might have been directed by other routes. The most notable historical use of the Col de l'Argentière was when Francis I invaded Italy in 1515, passes to the north being held by the enemy.

In the midst of the Cottian Alps, the next section of the chain, is the pass of Mont Genèvre (6,083 feet). This leads to the head of the Durance valley, and therefore, like the Argentière, is circuitous as a route into France generally. It was the first pass over which a Roman road was made, as was not unnatural, seeing that the Roman power in Gaul began with the occupation of the coast district, which still recalls in its name of Provence the memory of the Roman conquest. The Mont Genèvre was superseded in the Middle Ages by the next pass to the north, the Mont Cenis, but has at times been used for armies, and is now fortified on both sides more elaborately than its importance and military convenience would seem to require.

The pass of Mont Cenis (6,893 feet), which is regarded as the limit between the Cottian and Graian Alps, follows for

some fifty miles from Turin the same course as the Mont Genèvre. Thence the route crosses the mountains more to the north, and leads into the valley of the Arc, a tributary of the Isère. It is obvious that this is a much more direct line of communication towards the heart of France than any of the passes to the south. Whether the Romans knew of the Mont Cenis, or some other passage close at hand, is not certain: at most they can only have been aware of its bare existence, for they made a road over the much longer and rather loftier pass of the Little St. Bernard in order to reach the Isère. When and why the Mont Cenis came to be more appreciated does not fully appear, but from an early date in the Middle Ages it became the principal route for traffic of all kinds across the western Alps. The tunnel which now pierces them does not go under the Mont Cenis, a slightly different line making the actual tunnel much shorter; but it is generally known by its name, and with good reason, since the line of the new railway is, except for a few miles, the same as that of the old road. The most striking historical use of the pass was by the emperor Henry IV, who was obliged, all the direct routes from Germany into Italy being barred by his enemies, to make the long circuit by Mont Cenis in order to go to his humiliation at Canossa.

The Romans, as has been mentioned above, used the pass of the Little St. Bernard (7,179 feet), which is considered to divide the Graian from the Pennine Alps. This pass leads directly to the head of the Isère, but instead of starting from Turin, like all other passes of the western Alps, it follows the Val d'Aosta, which opens on the Italian plain some distance east of Turin. Like the Mont Genèvre, it lost its practical importance after the Mont Cenis came into general use, and it has scarcely ever been employed for military purposes.

From Mont Blanc, the Pennine Alps run eastwards for

some seventy miles to the Simplon pass (6,628 feet), which is the main route from Italy into the upper valley of the Rhone. Parts of the route are too difficult for it to have been of much practical use until the carriage road was made by order of Napoleon, whose motive is shown in the inquiry he more than once uttered—*le canon quand passera-t-il le Simplon?* On the other hand it has proved feasible to make a tunnel under the Simplon at a much lower level than the Mont Cenis and St. Gotthard tunnels, thus saving much difficulty in engineering the approaches. Napoleon was doubtless led to construct this road by his experience in 1800 of the loftier though naturally easier pass of the Great St. Bernard (8,111 feet). This was a main route in the Middle Ages for pilgrims and other travellers bound for Rome from north-western Europe, for whom it was plainly more direct than the Mont Cenis. Being so high, it is more dangerous in winter than the other frequented passes, and consequently was the first on which a monastic hospice was established for the succour of travellers. On the Italian side it leads into the Val d'Aosta, like its namesake, while the Simplon leads down upon Lago Maggiore, and so almost directly to Milan. It is obvious that one or other of these passes must needs be employed if an army is to move between Italy and the western regions of Switzerland. The only military use of the St. Bernard, however, which is of historical importance was for Napoleon's passage in 1800[1]: and the military history of both that and the Simplon was happily closed on Napoleon's fall, by the permanent neutralization of Switzerland.

All the passes, of which mention has been made so far, lead from Italy into the Rhone-land—either to the portion of the river above the lake of Geneva, where its course is westerly, or to tributaries which join the Rhone in its southerly course below Lyons. All too except the Simplon

[1] See pp. 268–9.

diverge nearly from a common centre at Turin, and furnish complete reason for the permanent importance of that city in the military history of north Italy. The remainder of the Alpine passes lead to the Rhine or to the Danube, and their history is naturally concerned chiefly with the relations of Germany to Italy.

Most important of all commercially is the St. Gotthard (6,936 feet), now penetrated by a railway. From this pass the direct ascent on the Italian side is by the valley of the Ticino to the head of Lago Maggiore. It thus served the Swiss of canton Uri, immediately north of the mountains, as a way of access to the Italian territories conquered by them in the fifteenth century, which now form part of the Swiss confederation as canton Ticino. Northwards from the St. Gotthard the Reuss flows through the heart of Switzerland into the Rhine above Basle, thus forming the natural route between Italy and the Rhine-land. The most noted military use of this pass was when Suvorov in 1799 forced his way across it, only to find that he could not advance beyond the head of the lake of Lucerne[1].

Like the Rhone, the chief stream of the Rhine rises near the St. Gotthard, flows parallel to the main chain for some distance, and then turning away from the mountains, forms a great lake before flowing seaward. There are three passes from Italy into this trough of the upper Rhine, the Lukmanier (6,289 feet), only recently provided with a road and of no historical account, the Bernardino (6,769 feet) from the Ticino valley, and the Splügen (6,945 feet) from the head of the lake of Como. The two latter routes unite on the northern side, and descend upon Chur by the extraordinary defile of the Via Mala. This alone is sufficient to account for these passes not figuring conspicuously in history.

The Splügen is not the only pass across the Alps from the head of the lake of Como. At Chiavenna, whence the

[1] A fuller account of Suvorov's remarkable march is given in chap. xv.

valley leading to the Splügen runs northwards, the Val Bregaglia runs to the north-east, and from near the head of it the Septimer pass (7,582 feet) crosses to another branch of the Rhine. This, though considerably higher, presents less natural difficulties than the Splügen, and was used in the days of the Roman empire, and very probably earlier still. The Romans, however, after their conquest of all that region in the reign of Augustus, made a great road to Chur, their head quarters on the upper Rhine, by a more circuitous though safer route.

At the upper end of Val Bregaglia the Maloja pass (5,942 feet) leads to the head waters of the Inn. Thus the Piz Lunghino to the north of it may be considered the central point of the river and mountain system of Europe, since from it, and from it alone, water flows to the North Sea via the Rhine, to the Black Sea by the Inn and Danube, and to the Adriatic by the Po. Not many miles down the Inn valley, the slope of which is for a long distance very gentle, the Julier pass (7,503 feet) crosses the mountains to the north. The name of this pass was of course attached to it when the Roman road was made, but it is reasonably supposed to have been used in earlier times. The topographical conditions keep it singularly free from snow, and it is therefore invaluable for winter traffic. None of these passes are however of much importance, except for peaceful intercourse. All through modern history the Swiss confederation tended to preserve its neutrality in European wars, and the little Graubünden, which occupied the whole of the upper Rhine basin and extended across to the head of the Inn, were in constant alliance with Switzerland, though they were only formally incorporated with it in 1798. Thus the whole northern face of the Alps, from the head of the Rhone to some way down the Inn, has been for some centuries practically closed to armies, except in 1799–1800, and is likely to remain so.

The main chain of the Alps is considered to be that on the south side of the Inn. Parallel to it on the south is the long Valtelline, which is drained by the Adda into the lake of Como. There are several high passes out of this valley northwards to the Inn, but none of them requiring historical mention. At the head of the Valtelline two lofty passes lead to the head waters of the Adige, whence the way is easy to the Inn valley, just below where that river quits what is now Switzerland. These passes, though not over the main chain, had at one juncture a very real historical importance. Over one of them, the Stelvio (9,177 feet), is now carried the highest carriage road in Europe.

The easiest and lowest of all the great Alpine passes is the Brenner, which connects the Inn with the Adige. From the actual source of the latter there is the pass just referred to, only 4,596 feet in height, and very easy and gentle in its slopes, except that it reaches the Inn just above a formidable defile. Some seventy miles shorter, however, and at least equally easy is the route which follows the Eisack, the tributary that joins the Adige at Botzen. This leads to the Brenner (4,588 feet), the only pass across the Alps over which a railway exists that can be used in winter, and so down to Innsbruck. It is evident from the map that this is the natural line of communication between Germany and Italy. As such it was throughout the Middle Ages the route by which the Emperors habitually entered Italy, whether coming with armies to encounter their unruly nominal subjects in the Lombard cities, or for a peaceful coronation progress.

Between Botzen and the Lombard plain there are a variety of routes. The shortest follows the course of the Adige till it emerges on the plain at Verona: this accounts for the supreme importance which the Emperors attached to having that city on their side. Not quite so easy, but more convenient for communication towards Venice, is a route from

Trent eastwards over to the head of the river Brenta, and so to the plain at Bassano. The head of the lake of Garda is also readily accessible by diverging westwards from the Adige valley at more than one point. All these variations of the direct route figure in the campaign of 1796, when the Austrians made repeated attempts to regain their hold on Lombardy.

There is also a more circuitous route, or rather pair of routes, more to the westwards. Between Botzen and Trent a lateral valley, called the Val di Sole, joins the Adige from the west. At the head of this valley the Tonale pass (6,483 feet) leads into Val Camonica, and so down to the small lake of Iseo and to Brescia. In early times it was the practice, for some reason not discoverable, to use another route through Val di Sole, in preference to descending the Adige. This is a pass over the ridge bounding Val di Sole on the south, to the head of Val Rendena, down which flows the stream that expands into the lake of Garda. Tradition asserts that Charlemagne in one of his progresses founded the church in the highest large village of Val Rendena, and there are other traces of similar use of it. The ordinary peaceful traffic was great enough, Val Rendena being very fertile, to make it worth while to establish a hospice at the top for the shelter of travellers; but the *détour* is so great for the passage of an army between Germany and the Italian plain that no commander would have taken it unless of necessity, when once the topography was understood.

Not far east of the Brenner the Alps cease to form a single chain, their altitude also becoming less. To reach the Danube in a northerly direction from the head of the Adriatic it is necessary to cross two or three diverging ridges. The passes over these are however neither few nor difficult. Hence little or nothing turns on their exact position; generally speaking, they allow fairly easy access

to Italy from the east and north-east.[1] The mountains are no longer barriers: they are obstacles, but not very serious ones. When Napoleon in 1797 compelled the Austrians to evacuate Italy, their retreat over some of these passes was conducted after the ordinary fashion of a retreat which is actively pressed by the enemy. They tried to hold the French off when a favourable position presented itself: otherwise they retired steadily and rapidly, and were followed with equal steadiness. There was no trace of the serious losses and disorganization which inevitably occur when a beaten army has to cross in haste a real mountain barrier, none of the relief which such an army experiences when it has succeeded in placing that barrier between itself and the pursuers.

It should now be clear why the Alps, though the greatest mountains in Europe, have never availed to preserve Italy from invasion. For many miles at a time they are for practical purposes inaccessible. Then comes a gap, or more than one gap close together, over which it is comparatively easy to pass. These gradually become known; entrance into Italy is feasible at these points, and at these only. Many causes conspire to make the use of the Alpine passes, for military purposes, almost entirely one-sided. Invaders pour into Italy, whether migrating tribes or civilized armies; but Italy has never been politically in a condition in which she should send out armies across the Alps, except when Rome was mistress of whole regions beyond them; and migrating tribes were too well off to wish to quit Italian soil. Peaceful traffic of course has been in both directions: all through the Middle Ages there was the flux and reflux of pilgrims and others frequenting Rome when she was the one ecclesiastical centre, and half the business of life was controlled by the Church. After the Italian cities had almost monopolized the trade of the Mediterranean, there was much commercial traffic over the

[1] See, further, Chap. XXIII. [ED.]

Alps so long as their pre-eminence lasted. On the whole, however, the Alps have operated, as they were bound to operate, in diminishing the volume of peaceful communication: it was only valuable goods that would bear the cost of a toilsome journey over them.

It remains to note the historical instances which show how insufficient a defence against invasion the Alps have proved. There are traces of many peoples having inhabited Italy in pre-historic times, of whom little beyond their names is known. Some seem to have entered the south of the peninsula by sea; it is probable that the Ligurians came in along the coast at the north-western corner. There seems no reason to doubt that the Latins, if for convenience one may use that name for all Italian peoples known to be of the same Aryan stock, entered from the north-east. Their predecessors, whether Aryan or not, are historically mere shadows: conjecture about them is easy, but scarcely capable of verification. The Etruscans, who present the most interesting and the least soluble problem of all, were doubtless once a great people. They probably contributed much to Roman civilization, but still they vanished. It was the Latins, whatever they assimilated from outside, who became the dominant race, and gradually built up the Roman empire.

The affinities of language and ideas between Greeks and Latins are so close as to leave no reasonable doubt that they formed parts of the same wave of population spreading over Europe from the east. Parting from their kindred probably somewhere in the region of the lower Danube, the Latins crossed the south-eastern branch, or branches, of the Alps, which are comparatively low and easy to traverse, to the head of the Adriatic, and so spread down the peninsula. The position of the territories once occupied by the Etruscans, Tuscany and much of the Po basin, seems to imply that they followed the Latins rather than preceded them, and

traces of them are supposed to show that they came in from the north, through what are called the Rhaetian Alps. More confidently it can be affirmed that the Gallic tribes, who by the end of the fifth century B. C. had spread over the whole plain of the Po, came over the western Alps, though it is of course impossible to guess by what routes. Strong in numbers and undisciplined valour, they threatened to overrun the whole peninsula, but were beaten back by the organized strength of Rome and her allies. They continued to form the bulk of the population north of the Appennines, even after Rome had in some sense conquered them in the interval between the first and second Punic wars, and were no small support to Hannibal, after he had crossed from the land of their kindred beyond the Alps into Cisalpine Gaul—the name of Italy was not yet extended to the plain of the Po.

The most remarkable historical event connected with the passes of the Alps is certainly the passage of Hannibal; and much critical energy has been expended in trying to determine his route, without further success than showing that he must certainly have crossed by some pass south of Mont Blanc. The Col de l'Argentière may be taken as the most southerly route possible, the Little St. Bernard as the most northerly; but within those limits certainty is impossible. It is perfectly reasonable to have an opinion, and even to hold it strongly, but no fair-minded man can say that the question is settled. The balance of opinion has inclined now to one, now to another, of the four passes across the western Alps already described. Those who confined their attention to the authorities, without much personal knowledge of the ground, tended on the whole to believe in one of the pair of passes from the Isère. The mountaineers, laying stress on the natural features, believe in the passes from the Durance. Any conclusion involves explaining away some of the detailed statements

made by Polybius and Livy, through whom alone are known to us any details at all. This is not unnatural, seeing how vague and uncertain, in comparison to modern standards, was the geographical knowledge then possessed.

Hannibal, coming from distant Carthage, had of course to rely upon guidance from the Gauls: he obviously knew before starting that the Alps were passable, but there is no indication that he had any knowledge either of the difficulties of the task, or that there was any choice of routes. Given the circumstances of his march, it was obviously his interest to take the shortest way from the mouth of the Rhone. On the other hand he was obliged to go some distance up the river, seeing that he had resolved not to attack the Romans and attempt to force his way along the coast. It is certain, for the latter reason, that he did not march straight up the Durance or its tributary the Ubaye: it is certain, from the time his journey took, that he did not go the whole way up the Isère or the Arc. He must certainly have been led by his Gallic guides over some intervening hills, to reach the foot of any pass. Geographical probabilities of the large kind, and also the topographical details of the possible passes, lead alike to the conclusion that Hannibal crossed from the Durance basin, the Col de l'Argentière being, if anything, slightly more probable than the Mont Genèvre. All that he knew himself was doubtless that his guides undertook to take him across into Cisalpine Gaul.

The conduct of Scipio, the Roman general commanding against Hannibal, also tends to show that Roman knowledge of the Alpine passes was slight. Scipio, when he found that the Carthaginians had marched up the Rhone, took for granted that they were going to cross the Alps, and removed his army by sea to Italy, in order to meet the enemy in the plain of the Po. Scipio was not wanting in capacity, as this prompt action shows. It is no unfair

conjecture that if he had possessed any definite knowledge of the Alpine valleys, he would have landed at Genoa, and posted himself at Turin, in order to encounter Hannibal before he could reach the open plains, where the famous African cavalry would have free scope. If however he knew that there were various routes, but had only confused and imperfect information about them, the course which he adopted, of waiting on the Ticino, was obviously right.

The historical importance of Hannibal's feat is not however concerned with the determination of his exact route. It was a revelation to the world that an army, as distinguished from a mere horde—that an army with all its *impedimenta* could be conveyed across a great mountain range. Nor was it long before his example was followed. His brother Hasdrubal led an army into Italy ten years later, apparently by one of the passes from the Isère, with unexpected ease and speed.

A century afterwards occurred another invasion of Italy, which illustrates the difficulty of defending a mountain frontier such as the Alps. The Romans were by that time effectively masters of the whole Po basin, as well as of Provence; geographical Italy was also now politically united under one government. They were aware that the hordes of barbarians, known to history as the Cimbri and Teutones, were on the move for Italy. These formidable enemies had either trampled over, or won to their side, the tribes beyond the Alps, both in the Rhone-land and in the modern Switzerland. They apparently formed a scheme, highly advanced for their stage of civilization, of entering Italy by two widely distant entrances, and joining forces on the Po. The Romans were informed of their purpose, and sent one consul to Provence, while the other waited on the Adige. Unfortunately our authorities are so brief that they give no hint as to the route by which the Cimbri

entered Italy; all we know is that the consul Catulus failed to stop them, and that they moved westwards up the north bank of the Po to meet their kindred. Fortunately Marius had destroyed the Teutones in Provence, and was in time to join his colleague, and crush the Cimbri also, not far from the Ticino. One may conjecture that the St. Gotthard pass was unknown at the time, or the Cimbri, who were guided by their Helvetian allies, would not have gone so far to the eastwards as they did; though whether they crossed from the head of the Rhine, or made the still longer circuit by the Inn and Adige, we cannot even guess.

As the Roman empire extended to its ultimate limits in Europe, the Alps became no longer a frontier. Naturally therefore centuries elapsed before they again figured in history. In the convulsions which followed the death of Nero, two candidates for the imperial throne successively entered north Italy, one from the west, the other from the east. Each in turn defeated the rival in possession on the Lombard plain, and as it happened on the same battlefield, but in neither case was there any defence of the mountain passes. In the break up of the Western empire, the Teuton tribes seem to have entered Italy as they pleased: the Alps might as well not have existed. Throughout the Middle Ages, the regions on both sides of the Alps were divided up into so many small states (if the word can be reasonably applied), all virtually independent, and all formally included in the Empire, that the mountains continued to be of little political importance. If the Emperor had to expect opposition on one route, he could take another; practically his communications with Italy lay chiefly over the Brenner and its variations. From western Europe the usual routes were, as has been said, the Great St. Bernard and the Mont Cenis; but nothing historically turned on this fact, travel over the Alps being substantially that of private persons, largely on business connected with the Church.

Before the close of the Middle Ages several political changes had occurred, which greatly affected the historical use of the Alpine passes.

1. Venice had extended her territories far inland, and thus commanded the Italian exit of all the passes as far as the lake of Garda.

2. The duchy of Milan, by similar extension, held the southern face of the Alps from Garda to beyond the Ticino.

3. The Swiss confederation had been formed, and itself or through its allies the Graubünden occupied the northern slopes of the Alps, from about its present eastern frontier nearly to Mont Blanc.

4. The dukes of Savoy, on the French side of the western Alps, possessed also Piedmont, the upper basin of the Po, on the Italian side.

The inheritance of Milan, which was doomed to vanish as an independent state, was a chief bone of contention between Charles V and France. The Swiss as a nation aimed at neutrality, though Swiss mercenaries were to be hired at a price. Hence the battle-ground in Lombardy had to be reached by France, if possible through Savoy: if not, there was only the circuitous route which Francis I employed, by the Col de l'Argentière. It was truly said that the duke of Savoy's geographical position rendered it impossible for him to be an honest man. The dukes were very advantageously situated, provided that they were prepared to run great temporary risks, and that their policy was sufficiently unscrupulous. France was always willing to pay high for their alliance, as opening the door into Italy, and their matrimonial connexions were mostly with France. Similarly the Hapsburgs were ready to reward them if they sided against France. Obviously their dominions on one side of the Alps were liable to be overrun, if the fortune of war went against the cause they espoused: at the same time they were in that case fairly safe in their lands on the

other side: and when peace was made, their allies were generally desirous of protecting their interests, for the sake of future contingencies. This risky game was played for centuries, with considerable vicissitudes, but on the whole with great good fortune. The French made repeated attempts to establish themselves in possession of fortresses on the Piedmontese side of the Alps, but never with permanent success. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the duke of Savoy blossomed out into a king of Sardinia, and in the nineteenth became king of Italy. One scarcely sees how Italy could have been united without the house of Savoy to take the lead; and the house of Savoy owes its greatness to its command during many centuries of the passes of the western Alps.

Venice, commanding the eastern end of the Alpine chain, adopted a policy resembling rather that of Switzerland than that of Savoy. Strong enough to have her neutrality respected, having neither the strength nor the ambition to play an active part, she closed the direct access to the Italian plain against the Hapsburgs. During a great part of the sixteenth century, there was access from Tyrol to the duchy of Milan by way of the Tonale pass. When Venice extended her sway over Brescia and Bergamo, this route also led into Venetian territory, and was consequently closed to the Austrians. Hence arose one of the most singular episodes of the great European conflict, of which what is commonly called the Thirty Years' war was the German portion. At that time the Valtelline was in the power of the Graubünden on the other side of the Alps, Italian-speaking Catholics ruled by German-speaking Protestants, and naturally uneasy under the yoke. The Hapsburgs stirred up a revolt of the Valtelline people, in the hope of gaining thereby practical control of the valley, which would open the only feasible line of communication between Austrian Tyrol and the Spanish duchy of Milan, so long

as Venice on the East and Switzerland on the west were closing all other routes. Thanks to the intervention of France the attempt failed: but it is a curious illustration of the far-reaching influence of such geographical considerations, to find France making it a cardinal object of policy to recover for the Graubünden their control over this distant Italian valley.

The historical significance of the Alpine passes at a later date is dwelt on in subsequent chapters, since the military operations across them form portions of a war which included a great part of Europe. It may be noted in conclusion that there has scarcely ever been any attempt to defend any portion of the Alpine chain, as a frontier permanent or temporary. The reasons for this lie mainly in the political circumstances of Italy, which has never till lately been a nation united within the Alps, and having them for a frontier.

CHAPTER XV

SWITZERLAND

SWITZERLAND is, from almost every point of view, more anomalous than any other state now subsisting; and yet it is conspicuously to the advantage of the world that the anomaly should continue. If we take the divisions of Europe according to the main watersheds, which commend themselves to physical geography as the most intelligible and the most permanent, Switzerland comprises the heads of the Rhine and of the Rhone, besides the extreme upper end of the Inn basin, and a considerable encroachment on geographical Italy. It has no language, no race of its own. German is the tongue of the majority, but the French-speaking minority is large, and Italian prevails in one canton. Besides these, Romansch is spoken in a large district, a language containing elements which perplex philologists, though all are agreed that its foundation is Latin. Its races are equally various, possibly even more so; for some believe that they can trace in the extreme east the relics of a people otherwise utterly lost. The Etruscans played a great part in Italy during the ages which saw the first dawn of history; they disappeared thence entirely, but there are reasons, faint perhaps but not altogether fanciful, for thinking that some traces of them survive in the Rhaetian Alps, though it is a matter of conjecture whether these traces were left on their first entrance into Italy, or whether the last fragments of a people soon to be forgotten took refuge there. In religion again the Swiss are not very unequally divided between Roman Catholic and Protestant. Thus the country possesses no

unity whatever in any of those things which are usually taken to form the basis of a nationality.

Its history presents an equal number of anomalies. The confederation began through small communities of peasants, dwelling in the mountain region round the lake of Lucerne, combining to resist the oppression of the Hapsburgs. Imperial cities, desirous of securing virtual independence, leagued themselves with the forest cantons, and so gradually the confederation spread. It acted as a sovereign power, developed a system of tactics which made Swiss pikemen for a century and a half the most formidable foot soldiers on the Continent, defeated Charles the Bold, interfered in Italian affairs, and finally saw its military greatness shattered at Marignano. All this time the Swiss were formally included in the Empire, and never denied their theoretic subordination to its head. It was not until three centuries and a half had elapsed since the beginning of the confederation, that its separate independence was recognized at the peace of Westphalia.

The original cantons were all situated in the region drained by the Aar and its affluents into the Rhine below the lake of Constance, and the confederation was altogether German. A similar but much smaller league, or rather cluster of tiny leagues, formed itself in the upper valley of the Rhine itself, including all the districts in which Romansch is spoken. This remained for centuries in close alliance with the Swiss confederation, and ultimately was formally united to it as canton Graubünden. The extension into French-speaking regions was begun by canton Berne making conquests on its own account; and Uri similarly conquered the Italian district south of the St. Gotthard pass. Finally, as part of the resettlement of Europe after the wars of the French Revolution, the Swiss confederation was placed on its present footing. It now includes the former free city of Geneva, the former Prussian

principality of Neuchatel, the territories formerly subject to Berne and Uri, all as free and equal cantons of the confederation.

Switzerland, having thus formed itself in defiance of geographical principles, was recognized by collective Europe as a valuable member of the body politic. Its affairs had on the whole been conducted with a prudence and patriotism sufficient to justify a greater anomaly, but it was for their own sake that the powers of Europe placed the independence of Switzerland on a secure basis, by declaring it permanently neutral under their collective guarantee. It was recognized as being for the general good that the centre of the mountain system of Europe should be occupied by a small state, which should have nothing to do with the troubles of the greater powers surrounding it. The independent existence of Switzerland curtails the length of frontier along which France and Germany are in contact, and holds Austria and France, continual enemies in former times, entirely aloof from one another. In the same way, it shortens the common frontier between France and Italy, besides interposing itself between Germany and Italy. The difference made in war by the neutrality of Switzerland is pointed out in chapter xix, with reference to the campaigns of 1796 and 1799–1800. A further illustration was given in 1814, when the allies after Leipsic invaded France. Switzerland had been to all intents and purposes part of Napoleon's dominions, though technically a separate republic under his protection. It had been a recruiting-ground for his armies, and the allies, in no way bound to respect its colourable neutrality, found Basle a convenient base for one of their lines of invasion. In 1870 both parties to the war carefully respected Swiss neutrality: indeed the last forlorn hope of France was shattered by Bourbaki's army being driven against the Swiss frontier, and being compelled to choose between

surrender to the enemy, and taking refuge as quasi-prisoners on neutral soil.

The Swiss have throughout their history shown themselves equal to the requirements of their very peculiar position. The sentiment of nationality began to grow up in the days when the confederation was still homogeneous, but it flourishes equally in the later accretions, in spite of all the discordances already pointed out. Neutrality was their policy long before it became formally incumbent on them, as was natural in their geographical position; but it was, and is, neutrality ready to make itself respected by force in case of need. Theorists who are impressed by the formidable defences along the Franco-German frontier sometimes say that, in the next war, the belligerents will have to begin by ignoring the neutrality of Belgium, or Switzerland, or both. It may be doubted whether either would care to enlist on the side of the enemy a people which is well organized for defence, and has maintained so long a sturdy spirit of national independence.

Given that a separate state was to be constituted out of the heterogeneous materials which make up Switzerland, its frontiers are in most parts satisfactory and well marked. On the south, the main chain of the Alps divides it from Italy, except where canton Ticino descends to the lakes of Maggiore and Lugano. Nor does it much matter, on the assumption that the *raison d'être* of Switzerland is to keep neutral the central fastness of the Alps, whether this district remains Swiss or not. No danger results to Italy, nothing but the sentimental grievance that certain people, Italian in race and speech, remain separate from political Italy. They themselves are Swiss in national feeling, and desirous of remaining so: the loss of them would not in itself endanger Switzerland at all seriously, but the general interest is certainly best consulted by leaving Switzerland undisturbed.

On the north-west the range of the Jura forms a good frontier line towards France, so far as it extends. The line drawn across from the southern end of the Jura to the main chain of the Alps is necessarily arbitrary. None could be selected which would be a real military barrier against French aggression; the only defence of Switzerland, beyond her own patriotic spirit, is the European guarantee, which obviously would apply to any line. No other frontier would make a better, or worse, severance of races. It is perhaps a pity that, when Napoleon III annexed Savoy, the arrangement of 1815 was ignored, by which the districts immediately south of the lake of Geneva, if ever alienated from the house of Savoy, were to be transferred to Switzerland. In that case the frontier would have run from the Jura to Mont Blanc, which would have been more symmetrical. It cannot however be said that Switzerland is much worse off, or that any one suffers except the travellers in Switzerland, who find that they have to cross a frontier in order to visit Chamonix and Mont Blanc.

On the north, the great angle of the Rhine at Basle comes very near to the north-eastern end of the Jura. The long westward reach of that river forms, under modern conditions, a reasonable frontier towards Germany, though there are scraps of Swiss territory beyond it. At the north-east corner of Switzerland is the lake of Constance, formed by the Rhine, once in the centre of Swabia, and still surrounded on all sides by men of German race and language. It is a marked instance of the extent to which political influences can override geography, that this lake, fitted by nature to facilitate communication between kindred and fellow citizens, should now be bordered by territories of five separate governments. Baden, Wurtemberg, and Bavaria all touch its northern shores; Austria is at the eastern end, and Switzerland lies all along it on the south.

The eastern frontier of Switzerland is purely arbitrary,

from the geographical point of view. In such a mountainous region, bits of the frontier are naturally marked by spurs of the Alps, but there is nothing like a continuous physical line of demarcation. No reasons, other than historical, can be given for its being situated where it is, though in the course of centuries the characters of the kindred peoples, living side by side in Switzerland and Tyrol, have diverged greatly. Nor would it be easy to invent a frontier which should be obviously better, even if the inhabitants were left out of account. Towards Austria, as well as towards France, Switzerland must have her boundary left arbitrary; and, if past history be any guide, she has nothing to fear from her eastern neighbour.

The interest of Swiss military history, so far as the fighting was done by the Swiss themselves, is not geographical, scarcely even topographical. It lies in the tactics which enabled the Swiss pikemen to defeat the chivalry of Leopold of Austria and Charles of Burgundy. And the difference made to a general European war, by Switzerland being or not being neutral, is sufficiently dwelt on elsewhere. There is however one episode of the campaign of 1799, which aptly illustrates the peculiar conditions affecting warfare in a mountain country. After the Austrians and Russians had expelled the French from the plain of the Po, Suvorov was instructed to cross the Alps and attack the French in Switzerland. Massena had for months been occupying a position on the hills west of the lake of Zurich, from which the enemy in his front was unable to dislodge him, though he was not strong enough to drive them altogether out of Switzerland, and had no great motive for trying to do so.

There had been fighting in the mountain region of which the St. Gotthard pass may be taken as the centre, in the month of August, with the result that the French, after for the moment entirely driving the Austrians over the Alps,

had lost again a little of the ground they had gained. In this miniature campaign, fought out, as was inevitable, mainly with infantry, little turned on the geography. The French plans for attack were of course largely based on the mutual relations of the Alpine passes, but the mountains nowhere proved barriers. They doubtless impeded the march of troops, but little attempt was made to utilize them for defensive positions: nor indeed could they be very effective with mere musketry of short range.

When Suvorov entered Switzerland, he fought his way over the St. Gotthard with infantry: the pass was not practicable for artillery, which had to be sent into the Rhine valley at Chur by way of the Bernardino pass. It is obvious from the map that Suvorov, descending into Switzerland by the valley of the Reuss, might dangerously threaten Massena's flank, whereas from Chur he would only come up in rear of the allied army that was facing Massena. The peculiarity of mountain country however neutralized this prima facie presumption. The St. Gotthard leads to the lake of Lucerne, along whose precipitous shores no road then existed. The ordinary peaceful traffic was entirely carried on by water, and Massena had naturally taken care to withdraw all boats from the upper end of the lake. Direct advance being thus rendered impossible, Suvorov directed his troops over the Kinzig pass (6,791 ft.) to his right, in order to reach Schwyz. There being merely a footpath over a fairly high ridge, the Russians were spread over many miles of ground; and the comparatively small force which Massena could spare for the purpose sufficed to keep them cooped up in the narrow valley, in which their numbers could not be utilized. Suvorov, in no way daunted, crossed a similar but lower pass (5,062 ft.) into the valley opening on Glarus, only to encounter a similar check. He had now no resource but to retreat into the valley of the Rhine, and the first snows had by this

time fallen on the mountains. The Panixer pass (7,907 ft.) is not in itself difficult, but the track was hidden by the snow, the French kept up a pursuit, and the Russians lost heavily before they could make good their escape. No such series of passes has probably ever been crossed by a regular army. The lesson deducible is not, however, that mountains of moderate height cannot be passed by troops without prohibitive losses. Rather it is that an inferior force has a good opportunity of preventing a larger one from emerging out of a narrow valley to open country. Suvorov at each stage of his adventure had more than one pass available, nor did the difficulties of the mountain routes do more than hinder him, until the snow had fallen. The cause of his defeat, such as it was, was inability, in consequence of the topographical conditions, to bring his superior numbers effectively into action.[1]

The towns of Switzerland, like those of other countries, have grown up in places dictated by geography. Chur is situated where the Rhine emerges into more open country, just below the junction of its several branches. It was, as its name (Curia) suggests, the head quarters of Roman government in that region. Zurich, Lucerne, Geneva, are all situated where rivers emerge from lakes. The site of Berne, on high ground, more than half encircled by the river Aar, was admirably suited for primitive defence. Basle is not only at the great angle of the Rhine, but also in the sort of wide defile between the northern end of the Jura and the southern extremity of the Black Forest hills. It is probable enough that the defensible position of Berne aided its rise to importance. Basle was a natural place to

[1] Alison's account of this episode is one of the most absurd bits of military history ever written. Partly from total lack of comprehension of what mountain country is like, partly from a habit of using the strongest epithets without care as to their appropriateness, he gives a description which would be exaggerated if applied to the highest glacier passes in the Alps.

select as the meeting-place for a great council of the Church, partly because it was in a conveniently central and accessible situation, partly also because it was well situated politically. Technically within the Empire, it was practically independent of it, and therefore not under the dominion of any of the mutually jealous kingdoms of Christendom. Zurich and Geneva were important in the era of the Reformation, not for any geographical reason, but because Zwingli and Calvin dwelt in them. Their political position, however, doubtless gave the rival reformers much greater scope than if they had been immediate subjects of the emperor or the king of France. Nor is the modern industrial importance of Zurich, and other Swiss towns, based on any special natural advantages, such as mineral wealth. They are the result of the energy of an industrious and well-governed people, secure in the blessing of permanent peace.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RHINE-LAND

The history of the Rhine-land contains a series of attempts to override the most ordinary geographical considerations. The boundary between states may be rationally determined in several ways, by a solid physical barrier between them, such as the Pyrenees, by the dividing line between races and languages, by respect for one another's military power. A state without defensible frontiers, without a solid basis of separate nationality, can only subsist by virtue of very special circumstances, and on condition that it is strong enough to protect itself against attack, or that its neighbours are too weak for aggression. The attempts made to establish in the Rhine-land a state neither French nor German naturally courted failure, though one for the moment seemed to approach success.

The boundaries of the Rhine basin are scarcely anywhere such as to constitute real barriers extending for any distance. The actual head of it is formed by the main chain of the Alps, but in those sixty miles there are four passes now crossed by carriage roads. The Bernese chain separates the heads of the Rhine and Rhone, but this forms an absolute bar to intercourse only for about forty miles; and there are two passes, where it joins the main chain, which could always be traversed on foot, though it is only within a very few years that wheeled vehicles have been able to cross them. There are similar passes across the western end of the Bernese Alps, where they cease to be continuously snowy, and the chain presently sinks away

to nothing, leaving a broad strip of open country, which relatively may be called plain, between it and the Jura. The latter chain, though definite enough, and high enough to be an obstacle to intercourse, is nowhere a barrier against those who have sufficient motive for passing it. Under these geographical conditions, it was natural that the history of the two regions should not be altogether separate. Nor is it any wonder that the boundary between the Romance language of the Rhone-land and the Teutonic speech of the Rhine, should not coincide accurately with the water-shed between Rhine and Rhone, in the country lying immediately under the Jura.

Of the boundary between the Rhine and the Seine basins enough has been said in a previous chapter, where stress is laid on the fact that it nowhere forms a barrier, in few places even a serious obstacle. On the eastern side, though the watershed between the heads of the Rhine and the Danube is well marked and tolerable lofty, it is by no means impassable, and sinks to a mere line of small hills north-east of the lake of Constance. The mountains, if they deserve the name, which separate the upper Danube from the Main, the great eastern tributary of the Rhine, are scarcely more formidable than those which divide the Rhine and Seine. Nor are those which separate the Main from the Weser and Elbe more serious as obstacles. Further north, there is nothing to mark off the Rhine delta from the Scheldt on the west, or from the broad plain on the east, across which the other German rivers flow to the North Sea.

The Rhine-land is thus utterly unsuited to form a separate political unit, so far as having defensible frontier goes; and it is moreover, as the map shows, of extremely inconvenient shape for such a purpose. As a matter of fact, it has never even approached separateness in the matter of race and language. Ever since history began, Teutons have occupied

both banks of the Rhine from the Alps to the sea, and all the country to the immediate east of the Rhine basin. The French language has penetrated some way into the Rhine basin on the west, though it would be hazardous to affirm that the French-speaking people of the upper Meuse, or of part of Belgium, were, or were not, French in race.

Charlemagne's empire may be looked at from two points of view, as the Frankish kingdom to which several more or less alien peoples are subject, or as the revival of the Roman empire of the west with considerable variations. For the former Aachen was not an unnatural capital, though not in the ideal position. For the latter, authority so centred in the emperor's person that it mattered little where the capital was situated: in theory, so far as theory existed, the dominion of the emperor was universal, not national. During the reigns of both Charlemagne and his successor, the emperor's sons were from time to time set to rule over some portion of the empire—Aquitaine, Bavaria, Italy. These divisions corresponded more or less, in fact, to different nationalities, if so modern a word may be employed; but this was dictated by convenience, and was not intended, or supposed, to infringe the unity of the whole. It was merely acting on a method common enough in the true Roman empire, at any rate from Diocletian's time onwards.

The partition between the grandsons of Charlemagne in 843 was, as has been said above, the first step towards the separate nationality of France. Less definitely it pointed the way also towards a German nationality. The Rhine-land also then began its unfortunate history as a bone of contention between the two. The map, however, would suggest that this was rather an administrative arrangement than a partition meant to be permanent. The portion taken by Lothar, the eldest, was, besides Italy and the Rhone-land, a strip down the whole left bank of the

Rhine. As Lothar kept the imperial title, and the strip contained Aachen, Charlemagne's capital, the arrangement looks as if Lothar were to retain some kind of supremacy over the whole, with Italy as the theoretic seat of empire, and other territory such as would keep his brothers from collision.

No arrangement, however, in that age was likely to last. After Lothar's death, the whole of Charlemagne's empire went again and again into the melting-pot. The Rhone-land set up for itself as the kingdom of Arles or of Burgundy. The Rhine territories held by Lothar, and called by his name, there being no geographical or tribal name appropriate, split presently into two duchies. The upper one, to which the name of Lorraine has always attached, retained its identity till the eighteenth century, though not its integrity. The lower duchy broke into pieces, and lost its name, but its fragments are nearly all included in the modern Belgium. Both upper and lower Lorraine were, however, always regarded as included in the Empire, after the Empire had become definitely attached to the German crown.

The whole right bank of the Rhine was split up into small principalities, practically independent but technically vassal, such as in the feudal ages existed throughout the regions once governed by Charlemagne, and beyond them. All of these were integral parts of Germany, as were also considerable districts on the left bank. Those lying in the Rhine delta and near the coast of the North Sea, though nominally parts of the Empire, were nearly as independent of it as Provence and Savoy. United by all the laws which geography recognizes, by language and race as well as position, they tended towards political union, though the habit of partitioning a dead prince's territories among his sons more or less neutralized this tendency. With their destinies were associated the similar provinces on the left of the Rhine,

both the fragments of lower Lorraine, and Flanders, and other countries under the suzerainty of France, geographical juxtaposition proving stronger than the repulsive force of divergence in language, in relation to some at least. There was nothing in the circumstances to hinder the accumulation of all these territories under a single ruler, whatever might prove to be the difficulties of amalgamating them into a single state.

The fifteenth-century attempt to establish a middle kingdom between France and Germany was within measurable distance of succeeding. It had in its favour at that juncture the exceptional wealth and prosperity of the Netherland cities, and the extreme feebleness of the Empire. Nevertheless it failed, as a scheme might be expected to fail which set at naught the natural tendencies of mankind to ally themselves with their kindred, but not without leaving consequences, partly evil and partly good, that endure to this day.

The opportunity was afforded through king John of France giving the duchy of Burgundy, after it had fallen in to the crown, to his son Philip. The new duke and his successors, partly by marriage with heiresses, and partly by purchase direct or indirect, accumulated a vast number of provinces. The whole of the Rhine delta and of the Scheldt basin was added to the duchy and county of Burgundy. The last duke, Charles the Bold, tried to buy up the rights of the Hapsburgs not only in Alsace, but in the Breisgau and other parts of Swabia, and to seize Lorraine, which separated his southern from his northern possessions. His methods were ill-judged, and his arch-enemy unscrupulous; he failed ignominiously, defeated by the Swiss, and betrayed by his own followers. After his death Lorraine resumed its normal independence, its princes becoming more and more absorbed in France, through their marriage alliances and their consequent

French possessions. Alsace remained under the formal sway of the Hapsburgs for nearly two centuries longer, though there were several free imperial cities situated within it. The other provinces passed also to the Hapsburgs through the marriage of Charles' heiress to the emperor Maximilian.

It is said with perfect truth that the position of Charles the Bold, as vassal to France for part of his dominions, and to the Empire for the rest, was embarrassing and unreasonable. It was perfectly natural that he should desire to escape from it, and to make himself an independent king. Geographically, however, his position was utterly untenable. His subjects spoke partly French and partly German, or dialects derived from those languages, and the linguistic boundaries did not coincide with the limits of feudal suzerainty; and they were as little homogeneous in race as in language. Even if he could have overcome these difficulties, as might perhaps have been done with time, he possessed, geographically, either too much or too little. A kingdom stretching the whole length of the Rhine from Basle to the sea, with the whole left side of the basin, and a fair extension on the right, might conceivably have been established, though geography was against it in many points. A kingdom consisting of the Rhine delta, liberally interpreted so as to include the Scheldt basin, would have been compact and wealthy, if small, and might have succeeded well: the Dutch made themselves a very considerable power in the seventeenth century with less than half of it. Charles the Bold could not be expected to limit himself to the latter, and to acquire the former was impossible under the circumstances. He inevitably wasted his strength in striving after an ideal which was unattainable in face of the hostilities he aroused, not the least important of his foes being geographical common sense.

The Netherlands might have become a powerful kingdom if Mary of Burgundy had married an ideal hero, a man combining the great gifts of Caesar and Cromwell, of Washington and Napoleon, without the faults of any. Its frontiers must needs have been artificial, but not more so than those of Prussia, which has succeeded greatly. It had immense maritime advantages, and the foremost commerce then subsisting. Divergences of race and language were not greater than have been successfully overcome elsewhere. Absorption in the vast Hapsburg dominions was however fatal. Neither Charles V nor his son understood anything but absolute power; they ignored the constitutional rights of the separate provinces, theoretically still separate states, and provoked rebellion. As a matter of fact also, Charles V added to the Burgundian inheritance Gelderland, and other provinces on the right bank of the lower Rhine, which had never been included in Lorraine. These took part more or less heartily with Holland and Zealand in the struggle against Philip II, and ultimately formed part of the independent Netherlands. Thus the last acquisitions of Charles V tended to weaken, rather than to strengthen, the Hapsburgs' position in the Rhine-land.

The long war of independence was distinguished by more than one feature dependent on the peculiar conditions of the country—an alluvial delta, much of it below high tide level, and intersected by many channels and waterways. Thus the Hollanders were able, as a last desperate resource, to drown much of the land by cutting the dykes, and so enlist the sea against the enemy, when the latter seemed within measurable distance of complete success. Hence too the 'beggars of the sea' were both active and influential in the war: it was they, as well as contrary winds, who made it impossible for the prince of Parma to play the part allotted to him in the great world-crisis of the Spanish Armada. The war too, ending as it did, caused the ruin of

Antwerp as a port, a ruin only being retrieved in our own day. The treaty which acknowledged the independence of the Netherlands gave them also full command of the mouth of the Scheldt, which they employed to starve Antwerp for the benefit of Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

The issue, however, was decided not by the physical features, but largely by race—by the greater tenacity of the men of the northern provinces in defending their liberties, political and religious, while the southern provinces gave way. In the result the former became a separate state, with an unworkable constitution arising out of causes not geographical, and with one geographical peculiarity which makes the united Netherlands unique, at any rate in modern history. Not even Athens was so dependent on the sea, and Athens did not begin as a maritime community. The Netherlands owed their independence largely to the sea, to the commercial wealth which enabled them to sustain the contest, no less than to their opportunities in maritime warfare. From the first they could hardly have fed their population without the sea. So long as they had great naval strength, they could be a European power, weighty out of all proportion to their territory; when that waned, they rapidly sank to insignificance.

The Netherland provinces that remained under the Hapsburg sway became, as a result of the war of independence, more of a geographical anomaly than ever. The conglomeration of separate territories that formed the Burgundian inheritance had been, at any rate, preponderatingly Teutonic in race and speech, though some few among them were wholly or partially French, and the Burgundian dukes had been themselves of French blood. Since, however, Holland and its confederates were altogether Teutonic, the remainder after their separation was left not very unequally divided. One anomaly had been got rid of by Charles V, who ceded his claims upon the duchy of

Burgundy, such as they were, in return for the king of France's renunciation of his technical suzerainty over the Flemish provinces. The more practical difficulty however remained. Belgium, to anticipate somewhat in using that phrase, had no homogeneity whatever except in religion. The lesser half of the country spoke French, or a dialect of French, which may perhaps be taken as the best available evidence of its race affinities; and as this part adjoined political France it invited conquest whenever that monarchy was strong enough for effective aggression. The Teutonic remainder was safe, under the existing conditions, from any similar risk of absorption in Germany; but the Dutch had every motive for desiring to reunite to themselves whatever could be obtained. Moreover, Belgium was all the time under foreign rulers, who, whatever their original descent, became year by year more and more thoroughly Spanish in feeling and interest. It was no wonder that Louis XIV was able to conquer piecemeal a broad slice adjoining his own dominions, or that the Dutch annexed north Brabant. It was politics, and not geography, which kept Belgium during the eighteenth century subject to the Hapsburgs, but now to Austria instead of Spain. The arrangement made by the European powers after the fall of Napoleon, whereby Holland and Belgium were reunited into a single kingdom, was geographically somewhat more rational, but it had other and stronger forces against it. The French language had gained ground in Belgium, and with it French sympathies. The Dutch were detested there for various reasons, good and bad, and Europe did not care to insist on the maintenance of the union. The result was the establishment of a separate Belgian kingdom, as anomalous as ever in containing two races and two languages, but perceptibly tending towards France. The permanent neutralization of Belgium, by general European agreement, purported to deprive the powers of a well-used battle-ground,

and in particular to limit very materially the length of frontier along which France and Germany could come into collision. But geographical considerations outweighed political good faith in the minds of the German aggressors in 1914.

The expansion of France into the Rhine-land had begun long before the establishment of the Dutch republic. The beginning of the European wars which arose out of the Reformation was marked by a French attack on Lorraine, which resulted in the acquisition of the three bishoprics carved out of the middle of the duchy, including the great fortress of Metz. The dukes of Lorraine became more helpless than ever, dispossessed in almost every European war, and then reinstated for another precarious term. Ultimately, in the eighteenth century, the duchy was extinguished by one of those treaties which consulted the selfish ambition of great princes and the personal interests of small ones, but took no heed of geography. The duke was 'compensated' by being pitchforked into Tuscany, where the line of the Medici had just died out, and France annexed the relics of the duchy. The inhabitants probably gained by the change; they were largely French already, and became more so in sympathies as time went on. From the physical point of view no frontier line was obviously preferable to any other: the fortress of Metz was after all an artificial creation. None the less the French annexation of Lorraine perpetuated a geographical anomaly, though changing its character. Previously there had been people really French, in language and perhaps in race, subjects of a principality included in the German empire, though the tie had been long ignored. After it there were Germans in all respects who had been made subjects of France. The German conquest of 1870 made the political frontier correspond much more nearly to the division of races and languages, though entirely against the wish of the people, who had in the interval been incorporated in France.

It is instructive to compare the fate of Lorraine with that of Savoy, that is to say with the composite state over which the dukes of Savoy ruled. Both were divided in language, and more or less in race: both were situated between two great and often hostile powers: both were to a certain extent, in the person of their princes, attracted towards France. Yet Lorraine was, so to speak, squeezed to death between France and Germany, while the house of Savoy throve on the vicissitudes of several centuries, and ultimately became sovereigns of united Italy. The astute policy of the dukes of Savoy counted for something; but the main reason for the contrast between Lorraine and Savoy is geographical. It has been pointed out, in a former chapter, how the Alps between Savoy and Piedmont helped the fortunes of those princes. Lorraine had no such backbone: it lay completely open to France, and Germany had no particular motive for defending it; for it can hardly be said that Metz, in French hands, constituted a menace to Germany.

The acquisition of Alsace by France marks the end of the period of religious wars, as the seizure of the three bishoprics marks the beginning. It was a piece of sheer undisguised conquest, without any excuse of nationality or of a personal convention between any Alsatian ruler and France. Richelieu simply took advantage of the distractions of Germany to lay hands on a German province, separated from France by the definite barrier of the Vosges —a province essentially German ever since the Allemanni invaded the Roman empire, and Protestant in addition. Louis XIV completed the robbery, and indeed improved on the method. During a period of general peace he seized Strasbourg and other places—which, though situated within Alsace, were politically independent of it—and the Empire was not strong enough to resent the outrage. Nevertheless,

so great was the assimilating power of France, that Alsace, while remaining German in language and Protestant in creed, became thoroughly French in sentiment. Whatever may be said of Lorraine, the Germans, when they reconquered Alsace in 1870, recovered a thoroughly German land; but they also recovered one that strongly disliked the transfer.

No region in Europe is richer in historic towns than the Rhine-land, but there are only a few concerning which geography has much to say. Those included in the modern Switzerland have already been mentioned in chapter xv; but of these Basle alone has European importance. First on the northward course of the Rhine, after its great bend at Basle, comes Strasbourg. Alsace in French hands was and is a powerful weapon against Germany, as it gives the French a secure base for crossing the Rhine. In German hands after 1870 it became more of a fortress than ever. Theoretically, it ought not to have been a menace to France, for the well-marked frontier chain of the Vosges lies some way to the west. Practically, however, it was impossible to deny that the possession of so vast a fortified camp facilitated the prospect of a German attack on France.

The position of Mainz, where the Main flows into the Rhine, is obviously marked out by nature for an important town; and such it has been ever since Roman days, becoming in the Middle Ages the seat of the primate of Germany, first in rank, though perhaps not in political power, of the many prince-bishoprics included among the states of the Empire. Coblenz, at the confluence of the Moselle, has similar advantages of site and of Roman tradition, though it has never been equally important. Greatest of all Rhine cities is Cologne, situated considerably lower down, where the Rhine has left the hills behind and is approaching its delta. Like Mainz the seat of an elector-

archbishop, with dominions of greater extent, Cologne far surpassed it in extent of trade and consequent population. Like Mainz and Coblenz, Cologne has become in comparatively modern times a great fortress. The three constituted the second line of defence for Germany against France; though Cologne, almost cut off from France by Belgium, seemed out of reach so long as Belgian neutrality was preserved.

Circumstances have made Metz the only town in the valley of the Moselle which has military importance. Luxemburg, with a position which until modern times was considerably stronger, has been neutralized and dismantled—not without reason, for it would have been untenable against long range artillery. It is probable enough that other points on the Moselle might have furnished sites as satisfactory as Metz for the purpose of a fortress; but there Metz was, an ancient town of some little consequence, and it has become perhaps the strongest place of its type in existence. In German hands it was a standing menace to France, considerably more dangerous than Strasbourg ever was to Germany, because an advance from Metz had only the comparatively insignificant obstacle of the Argonne to pass, before being within reach of the heart of France.

The site of Aachen, the Carolingian capital, was determined by its springs of mineral water, the use of which dates back to Roman times. Not having the advantage of standing on a great artery of commerce, it was completely distanced by its neighbour Cologne, in spite of the prestige given by its association with Charlemagne, and by its continuing to be the crowning place of his German successors. It owes such importance as it still retains, mainly to the same cause which led to its original foundation.

The cities of the Rhine delta, which must be taken to include the Scheldt, are many, though the greatness of

some among them has long declined. Ghent and Bruges owed their mediaeval pre-eminence largely to causes in some sense geographical. They grew up within the territories of a not very powerful count, himself the vassal of a distant overlord, in times when walls were stronger than the means of attack. And they were the nearest cities to England, never without importance as a market, and were thus able almost to monopolize the English wool, which was then grown for exportation and not for manufacture at home. Submission to the Spanish yoke, in the long war of Dutch independence, consummated their ruin; but it had been begun by the discovery of America, and the consequent revolution in commerce.

Antwerp and Rotterdam are types of seaport towns situated far up a navigable river, out of reach of purely maritime attack, and rendered far more readily accessible by the introduction of steam power. 'Antwerp,' said Napoleon, 'is a pistol pointed at the heart of England'; and he did his best to create a fleet there, in the hope of some day carrying out the threat. The steady policy of England had supported for more than a century the treaty right of the Dutch to control the Scheldt navigation, Holland being, during most of the time, an ally of England. How far this was due to foolish commercial jealousy, how far to the belief that Antwerp, situated just opposite the mouth of the Thames, might be dangerous in hostile hands, we need not inquire. When it came at length into the possession of the arch-enemy of England, the pistol could never be made to go off, though the fact that Napoleon was loading it caused England to undertake what proved to be the most ignominous failure in her history, the Walcheren expedition of 1809.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BALTIC REGION

It is convenient to treat together all the lands from which rivers drain into the Baltic, and to include that portion of the north German plain which abuts on the North Sea. There is, as has been said, no physical barrier anywhere between the Ural mountains and the straits of Dover. Thus the movements of tribes in the migratory stage were only governed by geography to a small extent; they must pass between the Baltic and the Carpathians, but otherwise they could move quite freely. Of those movements in earlier times we know only the results. After the Christian era the only migrations in this region are the advance of the Slavs along the southern side of the Baltic, as the Teutons moved upon the Roman empire, and the subsequent ebb of the Slavs as the Germans reconquered their old seats.

Of the geography of the lands north of the Baltic little need be said from the historical point of view. The great Scandinavian peninsula, which separates the Baltic from the northern ocean, has always, since history began, been inhabited by a branch of the Teutonic race. There is no evidence that these Scandinavian peoples were strongly differentiated from the other Teutons by anything except geographical opportunities. In fact, their most marked characteristic, aptitude for the sea, was shared by the Frisians and others along the North Sea about, and west of, the entrance to the Baltic. Perhaps other Teutons under

the same conditions might have developed the same qualities. Certain it is that the Norsemen, to use the general name under which they became the terror of Europe in the ninth century, had every geographical inducement to develop maritime aptitudes. Their land has a rigorous climate, so that it is incapable of supplying a large population, or of giving even a small one anything beyond the necessaries of life. There is no exit from it except by sea, and the coast is seamed with fjords affording excellent harbourage, especially for the small vessels which alone they could build. No wonder that they became maritime, first as mere pirates, then sending off the swarms that forced themselves into various countries of Europe. Such opportunities ceased as time went on, and the Scandinavians had to be content with their own land, but their maritime habits continued. At this day the commercial navy of Norway is out of all proportion to the natural resources of the country, while many of its sailors also serve under the British flag.

The backbone of mountains that runs down the Scandinavian peninsula ought to be a backbone only, and not a dividing line. The snow fields are an impediment to intercourse, but hardly a barrier, not much more so than mere distance in that cold and thinly peopled land. There is no difference of race perceptible between Sweden, east of the mountains, and Norway, west of them, nor indeed between these and Denmark, south of the entrance to the Baltic. In the earlier Middle Ages the time was not come for nations on the large scale; and it was natural that in Scandinavia, as elsewhere, small kingdoms should be established, and that there should be hostilities between them. There, as earlier in England, these hostilities were mixed up with conflict between Christianity and the dying heathenism. There, as in England, a tendency to union showed itself—union even actually accomplished for a short

time, but broken to pieces again. Antagonisms due to many causes overcame geography, and what might have proved a very powerful nation was never consolidated. Scandinavia, with its complete command of the mouth of the Baltic, and consequent control over the Baltic trade, might well have become a great power, in spite of climatic drawbacks. Denmark, indeed, went some way towards it, retaining territories north of the straits, and keeping supremacy over Norway. But the Danish princes acquired German lands, which really weakened them by entangling them in German politics, and the persistent hostility of Sweden proved fatal. When Sweden at the close of the Napoleonic wars acquired Norway, as the price of her effective support to the general cause of Europe, Denmark definitely sank into a minor power. Norway, however, resented the transfer, nor did time suffice to weld the two nations together. Centuries of enmity proved more potent than every possible geographical motive for union. Differences in political ideas and institutions, instead of being smoothed away, as took place between England and Scotland, only became more acute, until in 1905 a formal separation took place. Happily the two nations parted amicably, but none the less they are weakened as against external enemies. The Scandinavian peoples, in fact, furnish a marked illustration of the principle already insisted on, that generalizations in the sphere of geography merely indicate tendencies, not rules. It is perfectly reasonable to lay it down that people akin in race, in language, in religion, will be likely to coalesce politically, if it is geographically possible. Yet here are three peoples very closely related in all three respects, who have never been able to coalesce, in spite of geography and of their own obvious interests. Indeed, the only pair which have ever worked well together are those which, geographically, stand most apart.

The Baltic has often been called the northern Mediter-

ranean. In some sense it played the same part, in the ages before the discovery of America, of connecting the peoples that dwelt on its shores, at any rate in trade. The commercial activity and importance of the Hansa in the later Middle Ages can scarcely be overstated, though its leagues embraced many towns outside the Baltic. Climate was of course unfavourable; trade is carried on at great disadvantage in a sea ice-bound[1] during nearly half the year, and is liable to be mulcted by the necessity of passing through a very narrow entrance, easily commanded from the shore, if it extends outside. The importance of the Baltic was bound to diminish as commerce became world-wide; but for a time that very extension tended, not indeed to the advantage of the Hansa trading towns, but to an increased demand for Baltic produce. First Holland, and then England, developed a need of Baltic timber and other articles of naval construction. Down to the period of European peace that followed the fall of Napoleon, the affairs of the Baltic never ceased to furnish an important factor in English foreign policy.

Finland is a country whose history has been entirely dominated by one geographical fact. Its extremely severe climate, uncompensated by any such advantage as great mineral wealth, has always kept its population sparse and poor. Its remoteness also has kept it greatly isolated. Hence it begins only now to have an independent history; it was conquered by Sweden in the twelfth century, having till then remained heathen, and after being fought for at intervals by Sweden and Russia during the eighteenth century, finally passed to the latter. And yet conditions existed such as might much earlier have made Finland a separate nation, if only the climate had allowed it to develop sufficient strength to stand alone.

[1] This of course does not mean that every square mile of the Baltic is frozen over throughout the winter, but merely that navigation of the sea as a whole is stopped.

The Finns are totally distinct ethnically; they are survivors from a race that dwelt in Europe before Celt or Teuton had appeared on the scene, a race that so far as is known was aboriginal. Despite their history of subjection to foreign powers, the sentiment of nationality is strong among them, and they resented being more or less forcibly russified. Geography certainly declared that Finland belonged rather to Russia than to Sweden, so long as it could not be independent: from the latter it is completely divided by the sea, while there is nothing but an arbitrary line of frontier between it and northern Russia. Geography, however, could not say a word in favour of the attempt to destroy the Finnish nationality.

The vast Russian plain offered something more than facilities for the Mongol hordes that poured themselves into Europe in the thirteenth century: nor was there any geographical reason—none could exist in that featureless expanse—why they remained in possession of no more and no less than they did occupy, the south-eastern portion reaching to the Caucasus and the Caspian. Similarly there was no geographical obstacle to Russia, when her national strength had been organized, gradually recovering this region, until the Circassians turned to bay in the mountainous valleys north of the Caucasus, and by their aid resisted conquest for many years.

Slavonic states grew up in the remainder of the great plain, the fluctuations of whose history do not depend on geography. Ultimately they coalesced into two, Poland on the west, which had absorbed Lithuania, and Russia. Long before this the Slavs, who in earlier times had extended to the Elbe, had been pushed back, bit by bit, to beyond the Oder, while Teutonic conquest, and rule over a subject Slav population, extended further still. Poland, with its back, so to speak, to the Carpathians, had an entirely arbitrary frontier as towards Russia, which occupied

all the north and east. Causes rather political than geographical brought about the ruin of Poland. The province of Prussia along the Baltic, which had been a Polish fief, passed to the electors of Brandenburg, and presently became independent of Poland altogether. Russia conquered piecemeal on the east, like Louis XIV in the Netherlands, there being in both cases no geographical protection to the weaker party. The final absorption of Poland by her neighbours made things worse, instead of better, from the geographical point of view. The Russian portion projected westwards like a blunt wedge between Prussia and Austria, while Austria, unable efficiently to support the independence of a Poland that could not defend itself, was not ashamed to share in the spoliation. Her part was Galicia, which lies along the north-eastern face of the Carpathians, and was thus beyond her natural mountain rampart. The geographical aspects of Poland's recent recovery of independence will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Russia would seem at first sight to offer a spectacle the reverse of what Scandinavia exhibits. There is a strong sentiment of nationality, in spite of marked divergences in race and religion; and that sentiment is undoubtedly Slav. There is a great mass of Mohammedan Tartars in the south, there are German-speaking Protestants along the Baltic coast, and there are Finns alien in everything. In a country, however, which both before and since the recent revolution has been despotically governed and backward in education and facilities of communication, it is difficult even to guess at the real nature of public feeling. The process of russification under the Empire was carried on too much by force to justify any expectation that it would be thorough, even allowing for known exceptions. And since the revolution a whole series of marginal independent states have set themselves up, including not only Poland and Finland, but

also Lithuania, Latvia, and Esthonia, along the Baltic; while there have been similar attempts elsewhere, as in the Ukraine and the north and south of the former imperial territory in Europe.

The dominating motive of Russian imperial policy, from the time when under Peter the Great she began to be strong enough to pursue a policy, was the desire of territorial aggrandizement. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that this was forced upon her by geography. A country without access to the sea, except on a small strip of coast ice-bound in winter, had every motive for pressing forward towards more open waters. The acquisition of Livonia, and later of Finland, though not unimportant, only gave her more of the same Baltic shores. Expansion southwards offered a better prospect, and Russia reached the Black Sea before the end of the eighteenth century. The narrow entrance to that sea was, however, entirely in the hands of the Turks, and Europe repeatedly prevented Russia from dispossessing the Sultan and seating herself at Constantinople. Russian aggressiveness in Asia is sometimes attributed to the same considerations, but this at any rate finds no support in geography. An ice-free port in the far east, or even access to the Persian gulf, though it might have gratified Russian ambition, could not benefit the commerce of European Russia.

The history of the north German plain is not separable from that of the Rhine-land and of the upper Danube basin, because geographically there are no barriers between them. The central watershed of Europe, between the rivers flowing to the north and the Danube, is indeed a real dividing line for a considerable distance. The Carpathians, though not thoroughly continuous, are true mountains, and so are two of the ranges that bound Bohemia, though by a geographical freak it is the two on the north, between which the Elbe carries the whole river

drainage of the country, and not the two that physically constitute the watershed. West of Bohemia, however, the [illegible]orm no serious obstacles, neither those separating [illegible]ain from the Danube, nor those between the Main and the northern plain. Geographically, there was no reason why the Teutons should not occupy, as in fact they did, the upper Danube as well as the basins of the Rhine and Weser and Elbe. Geographically, there was no reason why, at the first partition of Charlemagne's empire, the share of Louis the German should have had the western boundary actually assigned to it. Rather there was reason for the German kingdom extending further to the westward, so as to take in Teutonic lands which were at the first partition assigned to Lothar.

There is a certain geographical propriety about the four national duchies of Germany in the next age. Swabia corresponds pretty well to the upper Rhine, Franconia to the basin of the Main, Bavaria to the upper Danube, and Saxony to the plain from the Elbe westwards, while Lotharingia, which came to be regarded as a fifth, was on the lower Rhine, though scarcely including anything on the right bank. Separate national sentiment existed, at any rate for a time, in these regions, notably in Bavaria and Saxony. It was only by accident, however, and not through geographical influence, that the frontiers between them anywhere corresponded accurately with watersheds, and in no great length of time they ceased to be of any account whatever.

The history of a level country like north Germany is not likely to be very deeply affected by geography. There, as everywhere, the course of campaigns is liable to be greatly influenced by the position of rivers, and of the places where they can be crossed. The influence of the Elbe, and in a less degree of the Oder, in this respect is too obvious to need illustration. Towns again, there as

elsewhere, grew up on sites that were pointed out by geography, chiefly on the rivers. That the towns grew rapidly in political and general importance in the tenth century was due not so much to geography as to the deliberate policy of the Saxon emperors. The only city, perhaps, which deserves special mention is Dresden, situated on the Elbe, just below where it emerges from the defile of the Bohemian mountains. It thus becomes of vastly increased military importance, as the campaign of 1813 testified.

In a flat country frontiers between states, large or small, are bound to be more or less arbitrary, and they therefore can be shifted easily, as the power of rival neighbours or their military fortune varies. Geography rarely afforded any protection; what people had to depend on was themselves. Indeed, it would not be very far-fetched to derive the present unity and military strength of Germany from the very lack of defensible frontiers. The kingdom of Prussia, as has been pointed out in a previous chapter, could hardly have maintained itself at its foundation, certainly could not have waxed in strength, without a large and effective army. That army saved the state when attacked on all sides by superior enemies in the Seven Years' war. It must be admitted, however, that the central position between the Elbe and Oder, utilized to the utmost by the genius of Frederick the Great, did much to render this success possible. Geographical defencelessness contributed somewhat, no doubt, towards prostrating Prussia before Napoleon, but it was again the sense that safety could be looked for only through military efficiency that renovated the Prussian army. It was that army sedulously improved, and wielded by a greater military genius even than Frederick, which gradually united all Germany under Prussian headship.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DANUBE BASIN

The Danube plays a most important part in European history, greater even than the Rhine. Its valley was the main highway by which successive peoples entered Europe from the east. It formed along most of its length the frontier of the Roman empire, deliberately selected and maintained. Everywhere on the right bank there are traces of Roman rule, practically nowhere on the left bank, the name of the kingdom of Roumania marking connexion only with the new Rome at Constantinople. They are, however, merely traces: whether the subjects of Rome between the Alps and the upper Danube were Teutons or not, the region became entirely Teutonic in the fall of the Western empire, if language and institutions be any test of race. Beyond the Alps the Teutons passed as conquerors, but not to form the bulk of the population. Substantially the Alpine chain, where it separates the Danube basin from Italy, is the limit of the Teutonic race.

The watershed bounding the Danube on the north has been sufficiently described in chapter ix. As far down as the great bend to the southwards at the western end of the Carpathians, it leaves but little space on the left bank. And though they curve far away round the Hungarian plain, the Carpathians return to the river again below its final turn eastwards. On the south side, on the contrary, the watershed is everywhere far from the main stream of the Danube; but the Alpine chain, which forms it, branches

out to the northwards, filling up much of the country between the various tributaries of the Danube. All these mountain ranges are, structurally, spurs from the main chain; some approach very near to the Danube, and some do not; and more than one are of historical importance. The well-marked ridge bounding the Inn valley on the north sinks away to nothing before reaching the Danube; but it very clearly separates from the Inn what is sometimes called the Bavarian plain, the elevated table-land across which the Iller, the Lech, and the Isar flow northwards into the Danube. In the earlier Middle Ages this range had little significance; but after the break-up of the national German duchies, it became and has continued the frontier between Bavaria and Tyrol.

It must be confessed that the present political frontier has little geographical propriety. If all the Danube basin, at any rate so far down as Presburg[1], had been consolidated into a single power, Tyrol, the Inn basin, would have formed a natural and obvious part of its dominions. The arrangement by which Tyrol is pushed out westwards as a wedge between Germany and the Alps certainly lacks symmetry. Napoleon's transfer of Tyrol to Bavaria, though dictated entirely by his own selfish interests, had from this point of view something to recommend it. He calculated, however, without the Tyrolese, whose hereditary devotion to the house of Austria was invincible; and the Hapsburgs had duly appreciated and cultivated their attachment, partly no doubt from sentiment, partly also because of the value of Tyrol in giving access to Italy while they had important interests in that country. The Tyrolese rising of 1809 is sometimes quoted as an instance of mountaineers, aided by their mountains which form a refuge, holding out against foreign conquest. In truth, however, the case was very different: it was not that the Alps of Tyrol provided almost unassailable fastnesses, such as the Highlands

[1] Bratislava.

afforded to the Picts against both Romans and Angles, such as the Asturias afforded to some portion of the Spaniards when the Moors overran Spain. The Tyrolese assumed the offensive after a period of submission to treaty, fought their enemies in the open, and only derived incidental assistance on one or two occasions from the mountains, when the imprudence of the French entangled them in a defile. Moreover, the country was open to French invasion on all sides. As a military achievement the temporary success of the Tyrolese is all the more remarkable, in that it owed comparatively little to the mountains.

The mountains which bound the Inn valley on the south push out a spur so far towards the north-east that they leave a comparatively narrow space between their extremity and the hills on the south-western side of Bohemia. From just below Passau, where the Inn joins the Danube, there is what may be called a defile of some forty miles in length, through which the Danube passes into its second basin, of which Vienna is the centre. The second basin has a somewhat wider extent on the north side, since it includes Moravia, which lies between the Carpathians curving down to Presburg and the south-eastern frontier of Bohemia. Moreover the latter, though part of the watershed between the Danube and the Baltic, consists of mere high ground, so that practically, though not theoretically, Bohemia belongs rather to the second basin of the Danube than to north Germany. On the south side the last spur of the eastern Alps comes down nearly opposite the Carpathians, fairly marking off the second basin from the mid-Danubian plain. The latter must be taken to include the basins of the lower tributaries of the Danube, the Drave and Mur, and the Save, which successively enter the main river near Belgrade, and to be bounded by the ridge which, running northwards from the Balkans, leaves between itself and the southern point

of the Carpathians the narrow defile known as the Iron Gates. Below them the Danube flows through a level plain, bounded on the south by the distant Balkans, on the north by the gradually receding Carpathians, till it falls into the Black Sea.

The history of the Danube region corresponds very closely to this conformation. Up its channel the movements of migrating peoples flow steadily and as it were naturally, guided by the geographical structure, but not altogether controlled by it. When the Teutons have settled down after their epoch of conquering migration, after the Hun deluge has risen to its height and ebbed away again, Teutons are found in full possession of the highest basin of the Danube, but not confined by it. They are equally in occupation beyond the slight barrier of the Swabian Alps on the north of it, and beyond the Black Forest at the western extremity. Indeed the frontier between Swabia and Bavaria corresponds pretty nearly to the Lech, a tributary flowing north into the Danube, and ignores the watershed between the head of the Danube and the Upper Rhine. Between Bavaria and Franconia, on the other hand, the frontier is fairly represented by the northern watershed. To the southward there are points enough where the Alpine chain can be passed, and the Teuton domination extends far beyond it. Bavaria, as well as Italy, obeyed Theodoric the Ostrogoth. Teutonic occupation, however, goes but a little way beyond the crest of the Alps. The present limit of the German language to the south of the Brenner, the easiest pass, is well within the mountain region, though south of the watershed.

The Slavs at the same epoch occupy the second and third basins, not merely the immediate valley of the main river, but also the valleys down which flow its southern tributaries. The Magyar somewhat later pour westwards up the Danube, and after being decisively defeated and

thrust back out of the upper basin, settle down in the third or Hungarian basin. Austria begins as an eastern frontier district of the Bavarian duchy, organized as a defence against the Magyar, pushing through the broad Passau-Linz defile, and occupying gradually the whole of the small second basin. At the close of the Middle Ages the upper valleys of the Drave and Save, which belong to the third basin, all of them that can reasonably be called part of the Alpine region, are under Austrian dominion, though the bulk of the population remain Slav. Otherwise the Germans do not extend beyond the second basin, though by way of compensation they have pushed across the slight mountain barrier to the head of the Adriatic, and possess Trieste.

The Hungarian kingdom, politically Magyar, but with a subject majority of the prior Slav inhabitants, is confined on the north and east by the watershed of the Carpathians, but extends its supremacy over Croatia, the Slav region of the lower Save and Drave basins, and even across the south-eastern Alps to the Adriatic. The natural desire for an outlet to the sea, growing more urgent in course of time, as the world becomes more peaceful and commerce more important, overcomes the prima facie tendency to accept a mountain chain as frontier.

On the other side of Hungary geography vindicates itself. The Carpathians, which bound the whole north and east of the Hungarian plain, and return close along the lower Danube, curl round on themselves, almost enclosing Transylvania. This mountain barrier, though not quite continuous, and by no means impassable, has yet in fact served greatly to isolate the region within it. A considerable German colony maintains itself in part. The Slav people of another part are easily distinguishable in character. Politically also Transylvania was able to maintain a virtual independence during the stormy period in which Hungary was being fought for by Hapsburgs and

Ottomans. Its sovereign even aspired to snatch the prize from both, and to re-establish Hungary as a separate kingdom for himself.

Belgrade, situated on the Danube a little way above the Iron Gates, and within a short distance of the junctions with its last great tributaries, was for centuries the most important fortified place in south-eastern Europe. Its capture by Sultan Solyman in 1521 was the signal that the Ottoman power had burst the barriers which had hitherto confined it, so far as Europe was concerned, to the Balkan peninsula. Within a very few years the great victory of Mohacs gave Hungary over to the Ottomans. It is remarkable how their advance was controlled by the geographical conditions. Like a rising flood, the Ottomans submerge the Hungarian plain, extending to the Carpathians on the right of their advance, and up to the mountain land on the left. When at its highest, the tide has risen beyond the third Danube basin, and is lapping round Vienna. Repulsed from before the Hapsburg capital, the Ottoman flood ebbs back till it leaves a little of Hungary no longer submerged. Presburg, situated in the neck joining the second and third basins, becomes for a century and a half not exactly a border fortress, but practically equivalent to one. In the seventeenth century the energies of the house of Othman declined, and the Hapsburgs began to reconquer. A last convulsive effort brought the Ottoman armies again round Vienna, only to incur a crushing defeat at the hands of John Sobieski, king of Poland, the timely ally of Austria. In a few years more the Hungarian basin was finally quit of the Ottomans, and the success of the Hapsburgs is marked as decisive by the recapture of Belgrade, though they did not permanently retain it.

It was pointed out in chapter ix that Bohemia, though belonging on the watershed principle to north Germany,

historically belongs rather to the Danube region, for the geographical reason that its south-eastern frontier is only nominal, while on the north there are real mountain chains. Moravia, the triangle of land between Bohemia and the western Carpathians, which drains into the Danube near Vienna by the single river March, at an early date became closely connected with Bohemia, like itself populated by Slavs ever since the great Teuton migration.

The same geographical fact is emphasized by the ever-recurring connexion between Bohemia and more distant Danube lands. In the thirteenth century, when the German empire was at its weakest, Ottocar, king of Bohemia, bade fair to establish a great power in the very centre of Europe, essentially Slav. His defeat and death at the hands of Rudolf of Hapsburg did much more than found the great fortunes of Rudolf's house. It made the second basin of the Danube finally German, and connected Bohemia positively, and not merely nominally, with the Empire. For the moment it isolated Bohemia once more, but personal union with Hungary, more than once renewed and bröken again, became gradually more and more natural. The death of king Louis of Hungary and Bohemia on the disastrous field of Mohacs, leaving no representative of the old line except his sister, the wife of Ferdinand of Hapsburg, definitely laid the foundation of the modern Austrian power.

Heterogeneous as it was in the races and languages it included, and still more in constitutional machinery, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was by no means an anomaly on the map. It comprised all the Danube region except the immediate upper basin of the great river itself, which after all is more clearly divided from the Inn than from the Main, down to where the Danube turns eastwards parallel to the Balkans. It included Bohemia, which is as it were the converse of Bavaria, historically but not

technically belonging to the Danube region. In two places only, if we ignore details, did it pass beyond its natural boundaries: it possessed the strip of Adriatic coast beyond the mountains—an acquisition vital to Austria and not tenable by any other power—and Galicia beyond the Carpathians, which was a real anomaly and source of weakness. That there were various and mutually jealous races within the monarchy was a misfortune: that some of them had kindred outside the frontiers proved a worse evil for the Empire eventually. Austria afforded one more illustration of the readiness with which peoples may overpass rational dividing features that are not barriers.

The military history of the Danube region corresponds, as is natural, with the geographical conditions. The great river flows through it from west to east, and most of the aggressive movements, both migrations of peoples and organized invasions, are from the eastwards, or are driven back in the opposite direction. Moreover, the Danube down to Presburg runs near to the northern boundary, leaving a comparatively wide space on the south, traversed by a series of tributaries, being in this respect the exact converse of the Po. Accordingly, the great battle which checked the onward progress of the Hungarians was fought on the Lech: the less conspicuous but equally significant encounter which terminated the Mongol inroad of the thirteenth century took place near the eastern frontier of Austria proper. After the Hungarians have become Christian, they are inevitably the foremost defence of Christendom against the Ottoman Turks. On the Hungarian plain, usually within no great distance of the Danube, were fought the battles which brought Ottoman conquests up to the gates of Vienna, and drove them ultimately back to the Balkan peninsula.

When the conditions have changed entirely, and aggression in central Europe comes habitually from France, the

first conflict is naturally for access to the head of the Danube valley. For it is Austria which is the permanent enemy of France; and therefore attack is directed primarily against her, though the fact that her sovereign was also Emperor usually brought the other German states into the fray. The Hapsburgs, moreover, possessed territories geographically unconnected with Austria, relics of their mediaeval beginnings as princes in Swabia, which lay specially open to French attack. Alsace, beyond the Rhine, having been conquered, France had henceforth only to cross that river, for which she possessed in Strasbourg and other fortresses the certain means, to be face to face with Austria in the Black Forest. Accordingly, campaigns which concerned the Danube region began by the French forcing their way through the Black Forest hills. Repeatedly France found an ally in Bavaria, which obviously made the task easier; in any case, the lines of defence, for whichever combatant needed them, were best furnished by the tributaries of the Danube.

Occasionally, the fact that there is nothing like a military barrier between the upper Danube and the Main received practical illustration in war. Marlborough reached the course of the Danube from the north, and interfered between the advancing French and Vienna, though, by way of an exception, his great victory of Blenheim was won on the northern bank. Napoleon similarly surrounded Ulm with his armies in 1805. The same geographical condition rendered possible the masterly strategy of the archduke Charles in 1796. Two French armies invaded Germany that year—one in the Main region, the other across from the Rhine to the head of the Danube, converging gradually towards each other. Unable to withstand both effectually, he retreated until his two enemies were near enough together. Then, trusting to their lack of ready communication in a hostile country, he left a

small force to watch Moreau on the Danube, while he assailed Jourdan on the Main with superior strength, and drove him out of Germany. That task accomplished, he could return across the hills west of Bohemia into the Danube basin, and compel Moreau in his turn to retreat.

Several of the cities in the Danube region are worthy of special notice for geographical reasons, though of many there is no more to be said than that they have grown up on the river or its tributaries, the exact situation being fixed by accident, or perhaps by small topographical details. Highest up on the main stream is Ulm, which in the Middle Ages competed with Augsburg as a commercial centre, but is best known as a fortress. Its position, commanding roads through the hills of the Black Forest and of the Swabian Alps, is eminently suitable for both purposes. Its military history seemed to have terminated with the territorial changes resulting in the fall of Napoleon, soon after the most famous incident in its history. It has, however, been refortified since 1870, as a defence to south Germany in case of a successful attack by France on Alsace and the Rhine.

Ratisbon was the point at the eastern end, as Coblenz was at the western, of the line of frontier which the Roman empire carried beyond the Rhine and Danube. Doubtless it was selected as the site for a Roman town because there the small river Regen (whence its proper German name, Regensburg) falls into the Danube. Though never of the highest importance, it has always been a considerable city, and during the last centuries of the Holy Roman empire was the permanent seat of the diet. It was chosen doubtless for that purpose as being outside the immediate dominions of the Hapsburgs, then permanently in possession of the imperial crown, yet conveniently near to them, and not unreasonably far from being central to Germany as a whole.

Augsburg, another city of Roman origin, owed all its greatness to commerce. Accessible easily from the lake of Constance, and so from the passes out of Italy to the head of the Rhine, it is also reached, over no very troublesome mountains, from the valley of the Inn, to which lead other passes from Italy. Hence it was well suited to be an emporium for Italian trade with central Europe. Situated in the open plain of the Lech, its immediate position doubtless determined by a tributary there falling in, it readily drew to itself the trade from the east up the Danube valley, and therefore also from the north. The wealth of the Augsburg merchant princes, and the wide range of their commercial influence, was at the close of the Middle Ages proverbial. The great maritime discoveries greatly reduced its relative importance, as did the conflicts arising out of the Reformation, which culminated in the Thirty Years' war. Augsburg, however, still retains some traces of its former character as an emporium. A stranger, if one could be placed in Augsburg without any clue to where he was, need not be entirely incredulous if told that he was in an Italian town. This certainly could not be said of Nuremberg, the old commercial rival of Augsburg, not very far off, but beyond the hills that separate the Danube from the Main.

Munich, the modern capital of Bavaria, owes its importance to history, not to geography. Like Berlin, it has no advantages of site; but it became the seat of one of the small principalities which happened to accrete other dominions. Like Berlin also, though in even greater degree, it owes much to the perseverance of its princes, who have adorned it with many great buildings, and many treasures of art. Innsbruck, on the other hand, is marked out by nature as the seat of a considerable town. At that point the Brenner route, the most convenient of all Alpine passes, all things considered, reaches the Inn valley, which is

thenceforward fairly broad till it joins the Danube. Nor has one far to go up the Inn to arrive at easy routes towards the head of the Danube, across what are known as the Bavarian highlands.

Vienna is the only town in the second basin which requires separate mention; and perhaps no city in Europe owes more to geography. Originally one of many Roman frontier towns, it never rose to importance until it became the centre of the German 'march' pushed eastwards towards Hungary, and interposed between Slavonic Bohemia and Moravia, and the Alpine duchies of Styria and Carinthia, almost equally Slavonic. As the fortunes of the Hapsburgs gradually rose, Vienna became the centre of their great accumulation of territories, and for this its position was eminently suitable. Not merely is it on the Danube, with open communication east and west, and well situated also for communication to the southwards—it is also within easy reach of Bohemia, across the insignificant line of the Mährenwald. To it also naturally descends the obvious route between northern and southern Europe which crosses from the Oder to the March, between the north-western point of the Carpathians and the Bohemian mountains. No wonder that several military events of decisive importance have occurred within sight from the steeple of St. Stephen's church, if not from the walls of Vienna. Rudolf of Hapsburg's victory, which gave Austria back to the Germans; the discomfiture and retreat of Solyman's besieging army; John Sobieski's victory, which finally drove back the Ottomans; Napoleon's victory of Wagram, which placed him at the zenith of his greatness—all took place close to Vienna; and the field of Austerlitz is not very far off.

The Hungarian capital dwarfs all other cities in the wide expanse of the third basin. Buda, perched on a hill immediately overhanging the Danube, possessed a con-

veniently defensible site, and it became the head quarters of the Magyar kings. Pest began as a commercial appendage on the opposite bank, there being very little room on the Buda side between the hill now crowned by the palace, and the river which is the necessary highway of trade. In later times the patriotism of the Hungarian people has expressed itself in the creation of the stately modern city, and in works intended to protect it against inundations, such as nearly destroyed Pest some seventy years ago.

[The present political division of the territories which formed Austria-Hungary until the collapse of the Empire is dealt with in a later chapter.—Ed.]

CHAPTER XIX

THEATRES OF EUROPEAN WAR[1]

MANY of the forms of influence exerted in history by geographical facts work on so large a scale that it is scarcely possible to discuss them in relation to a single country. The whole map of Europe comes under view if we attempt to follow out such influences in a great war, and there is no European war in which they cannot be traced. It will probably suffice to dwell on the illustrations derivable from the wars of the French Revolution, which are at once the most familiar and the widest in geographical range of any that Europe has seen.

Napoleon's first operation at the head of a French army, in April, 1796, is justly regarded as a masterpiece; though the difficulty of the task he set himself seems to have been exaggerated, like many of his achievements, by himself and his admirers. He attacked the allied Austrian and Sardinian armies posted along the crest of the Appennines, forced them apart more by skilful manœuvring than by hard fighting, and then, turning on the weaker of the two hostile powers, compelled Sardinia to sue for peace, before following up the Austrians. Military writers use this campaign of Montenotte as an illustration of the weakness involved in two armies acting together which have divergent bases. If the enemy can attack them successfully at their point of junction, each tends to retreat towards its base, for fear of having its supplies cut off, and therefore away from the

[1] The war of 1914–18 is dealt with in an additional chapter. [ED.]

other. The enemy, who is necessarily stronger than either singly, has the opportunity of crushing one, while holding the other in check. This is what Napoleon aimed at doing in the Waterloo campaign, and thought he had achieved by his victory at Ligny; but he was then foiled by the persistence of the allied generals in holding together. The Montenotte success, however, meant something much greater than separating his two antagonists, so as to deal with them singly, as will appear from the map. At the beginning of 1796, the army of which Napoleon took command was in a position combining almost every geographical disadvantage. It lay along the strip of coast between the Mediterranean and the Appennines, stretching eastwards from the south-eastern corner of France. It was therefore at a maximum distance from its resources, and was also liable to have no room to retreat if assailed by superior forces. Nor was this all: England being much stronger than France at sea, the whole coast-line was exposed to naval attack. On the other hand, the king of Sardinia was obliged after Montenotte to submit to conditions of peace which gave the French free access through his dominions to Lombardy. As a matter of fact, Piedmont was thenceforth virtually subject to France, and was before long formally annexed; but even without this, the advantage acquired by Napoleon's success was enormous. The French were able to use the straightest and easiest route into Italy, instead of the most circuitous and difficult to protect, and therefore to make their bid for domination in north Italy under the most favourable conditions.

The rest of Napoleon's campaign in 1796 was purely local, and therefore belongs to the geography of Italy. The conflict was entirely isolated, because neutral Switzerland lay between the French army in north Italy and those on the Rhine. The only effect which operations in either theatre of war could have on the other, was if pressure in

one quarter had so drained the resources of either belligerent as to weaken him in the other. As a matter of fact, the campaign in Italy, though not without vicissitudes, ended very much to the advantage of the French. In Germany, on the contrary, two French armies penetrated deeply into the heart of the country, and were driven out again by the skilful strategy of the archduke Charles, so that the French had made a great effort and failed.

The geographical conditions had widely altered when the next European war broke out. The French had in the interval overrun Switzerland, and could treat Swiss territory as their own, at any rate for campaigning purposes. Thus, in 1799, France was facing her enemies on the whole line from the North Sea to the south of Italy, where a new-fangled republic was kept in existence in Naples by French arms. The French were swept out of Italy by Kray and Suvorov, and were foiled in such attempts as they made to penetrate into Germany; but Massena held his ground successfully in Switzerland, and thus saved France from invasion. The campaign as a whole was, it is true, mismanaged by the allies; but nevertheless the effect of there being one large theatre of operations, instead of two smaller separate ones, was perceptible throughout.

At the end of 1799 Napoleon made himself master of France; the scheme of campaign for 1800 was therefore formed by him. It has been extolled with every imaginable superlative as a prodigy of skill; and the passage of the Great St. Bernard, in particular, has been described as an exceptional feat. As a matter of fact his plan was risky, and only succeeded by great good fortune. The events of the year are none the less highly interesting, as showing how the structure of the region involved suggests and controls operations of war.

At the beginning of 1800, as four years earlier, the Austrians were on the Appennines, the French merely

holding the strip of coast as far as Genoa. The rival powers also faced each other along the Rhine from Basle downwards. The difference lay in the French holding Switzerland, which gave them the opportunity of entering the upper basin of the Po from the north, as well as from the south and west. The direct route for a French attack on Austria, as is obvious from the map, is across the upper Rhine, always assuming that south-western Germany is involved in the war. The hill region of the Black Forest, filling up the triangular space which the Rhine encloses, flowing west from the lake of Constance and turning north at Basle, is the only physical obstacle to French advance. If they can penetrate to the head of the Danube the way lies open to Vienna. It is easy to see how greatly the task of forcing the Black Forest barrier was facilitated by the French occupation of Switzerland. They could turn the Black Forest altogether if they crossed the Rhine just below the lake, although the disadvantage of a more circuitous line of communication might possibly have balanced the gain. At any rate, they had an additional length of river on which to threaten attack, and thus to distract the enemy more effectually, and make it easier to force a passage at the point finally selected.

The Austrians, anxious to secure their hold on Italy, and blind to the possibility of attack through Switzerland, opened the campaign by besieging Genoa, the capture of which would open communication for them with the English fleet. At the same time they occupied the Black Forest with an adequate army, but formed no plan of aggressive operations in that quarter. Napoleon doubtless saw, as plainly in 1800 as later, that the only effective line for attacking Austria was towards the Danube. General Moreau, his one rival in military reputation, was however in command of the French army on the Rhine. Napoleon, newly made First Consul, could neither displace Moreau nor allow him the

credit of conquering Austria, if that were to be achieved. He therefore formed a plan by which Moreau was to force the Austrians out of the Black Forest and advance to the head of the Danube valley, but to rest content with that measure of success. Meanwhile the army on the Riviera, including the besieged garrison of Genoa, was to hold its ground as best it could, while he himself led another army across the Great St. Bernard into north Italy. In this way he would come between the Austrian army in Piedmont and its base, and would, if victorious, have it at his mercy. On the other hand, he would, if defeated, have very great difficulty in escaping over the Alps.

At that date there existed no good carriage road across the Alps, though rough cart tracks had been made over several of the passes. The Great St. Bernard, though the highest of these, is perhaps the easiest, apart from elaborately constructed roads or tunnels, and its position is also the most convenient for Napoleon's purpose in 1800. To take an army over it, entirely unopposed, was a simple matter, though involving time and labour. As a military feat it is not comparable to what Suvorov had achieved in the previous autumn, nor to Macdonald's passage of the Splügen in December of the same year. It is only because of the absurd fashion of lauding to the skies everything done by Napoleon, that it has been supposed to rival Hannibal's famous march. Napoleon was far too good a general not to use an easy route when it was available, though he was not above exaggerating his own performances.

Reports, skilfully propagated by Napoleon's orders, had misled the Austrians into supposing that the army he was going to lead into Italy only existed on paper. Hence their commander in Italy was unprepared for its emergence from the Val d'Aosta in his rear. Nevertheless he was nearly saved from the surprise by an apparently trifling obstacle to the French. Low down in the Val d'Aosta,

where it happens to narrow, is an eminence nearly closing the valley, crowned by a small fort. This was held by 400 Austrians only, but their guns commanded the road, and the walls were strong enough to defy field artillery. Mountain paths rendered it possible for infantry to get past the place, but only slowly and with difficulty: these paths were unfit for horses, and quite impossible for guns. After some delay the French soldiers managed to drag guns up the mountain slopes to a height from which they commanded the interior of the fort, which crippled the defence: and they were then able to convey guns at night along the road under the walls, though not without some loss. If the fort had happened to be so constructed that the road went through it, not a gun or supply wagon could have passed till the fort was taken. And if the slopes had been a little steeper, or if field guns had been as clumsy as in earlier days, it would have taken an indefinite time to overcome the resistance of the fort, quite long enough to allow the main Austrian army to be prepared to meet Napoleon. No better illustration can be found of the momentous effect which a small geographical obstacle may produce in war.

The battle of Marengo, which followed, was very near being a ruinous defeat for Napoleon, and was converted into a victory by two of his generals acting without orders[1], into a conquest by the inertness of the Austrian general, never very capable, and then eighty years of age. It was however a reconquest of Lombardy only: not until Moreau in the Danube basin was set free to move, at the termination of a long and ineffectual armistice, and win a great victory at Hohenlinden, did Austria acknowledge herself

[1] Napoleon would no doubt have ordered both Dessaix and Kellerman to act as they did, had he had the opportunity; but as a matter of fact they acted, and were under the circumstances right to act, on their own responsibility.

beaten. The vast difference between a successful attack directed at the heart of a state, and any amount of success in a non-vital region, could not be more aptly illustrated. Nor was Napoleon himself blind to the fact. Though personal policy obviously made it his cue to glorify Marengo and say as little as possible about Hohenlinden, in his subsequent wars with Austria he went straight for the Danube valley.

Twice in his career, in 1805 and in 1809, Napoleon entered Vienna at the head of a victorious army. In 1805 the Austrians had taken up a position at Ulm, imprudently far in advance of their own frontier, in the hope of keeping true to the German cause the small states of the south-west, whose princes had a traditional leaning towards France out of jealousy of the head of the Empire. Napoleon brought overwhelming forces to bear on this army, captured or destroyed nearly the whole of it[1], and had no difficulty in reaching Vienna. In 1809 the Confederation of the Rhine had been formed, and all the south German states were dependent allies of Napoleon. Hence the first encounter was further east, in the sort of loop enclosed by the Danube and the lower course of its tributary the Inn. Napoleon's brilliant strategy, in what is known as the battle of the Five Days, entirely discomfited the Austrians, and again the way lay open to Vienna. In 1805 he was able to seize the great bridge over the Danube, and consequently was free to cross the river and meet the enemy in Moravia, where he won the overwhelming victory of Austerlitz. In 1809 the bridge had been destroyed: he was foiled in his attempt to

[1] Napoleon's march on Ulm is often described as a marvellous effort of genius, and a striking instance of the importance of geography in a campaign. In truth it was neither: there was no geographical obstacle to overcome, no resistance to be expected. Any competent staff officer could have worked out the problem by what roads a large army could best move from near the North Sea to the upper Danube.

force a passage of the Danube at Aspern, and had to spend many weeks in preparations before he could resume the attempt and win a less decisive, but still sufficient, victory at Wagram. Outside the Danube basin the campaigns are very similar, and illustrate the permanence of geographical conditions in war. In both cases the French and Austrians fought also in north Italy: in both cases the Austrians, though able to hold their own in the subordinate theatre of war, were compelled to give way there by the great defeats in the Danube valley. In both cases Prussia, situated on Napoleon's flank when he had advanced to Vienna, was in a position to intervene against him with decisive effect, but in neither case could she muster up courage to do so.

When Napoleon resolved to attack Russia in 1812, geographical considerations, it is not too much to say, determined the action of every power concerned. The Tzar made up his mind to stand strictly on the defensive, partly no doubt in order to make it clear that this war was an act of wanton aggression on Napoleon's part, but also because he realized that if the Russian armies could not arrest the tide of invasion, the size of the country would prove an effectual defence, provided that the nation held out. Napoleon was master of the Continent as far east as the line of the Adriatic, except in the Spanish Peninsula. Between his virtual dominions and the Russian frontier lay two states still nominally independent. He could not reach Russia except across their territory—practically it must be through Prussia, for within the Russian frontier bordering on Austria lay the region of the Pinsk marshes, presenting for hundreds of miles a barrier against the movement of armies. Thus if his route lay through Prussia, Austria was on his flank: he could not possibly invade Russia, unless assured that Austria would not prove hostile. The two German powers were in a very awkward position. Both had suffered grievously at Napoleon's hands, in military defeats

and losses of territory, and hated him accordingly. Both saw that if they took part with Russia they would for obvious geographical reasons have to bear the brunt of Napoleon's attack. And as they were suspicious that Russia might leave them in the lurch, and make peace with Napoleon at their expense, as had happened before, Austria at least would not run the risk. Prussia, indeed, being in the more desperate position, would have done so if promised full support from Russia ; but the Tzar had made up his mind to take no aggressive step whatever. Probably, if assured that both Austria and Prussia would co-operate in earnest, he would readily have accepted the opportunity of fighting out the war on their territories. But Austria would not, and Prussian assistance alone was not in his judgement worth the sacrifice of the advantages resulting from a purely defensive attitude. Austria and Prussia were therefore obliged to side with Napoleon, and to furnish contingents to his armies : but the difference in their geographical position was the main reason why they fared differently. Prussia could have been instantly overrun by Napoleon's troops, and was therefore helpless : for he would have spared no severity in order to obtain full control of Prussian territory for the passage of his armies. Austria, besides being somewhat stronger, was not on Napoleon's route, but could threaten his flank. He could have overwhelmed her by force, but it was cheaper to treat her with some consideration so as to secure himself against her hostility ; and Metternich knew how to make good use of the opportunity.

When the invasion actually began, geographical considerations were still paramount. It is a total mistake to suppose that the Russians had formed a subtle plan of luring Napoleon to his ruin by retreating continually before him : still less did they calculate that the cold would destroy his army. They would have fought near the frontier in the

natural way had it been possible; but the Tzar's expectations were doubly deceived. Napoleon's numbers proved far greater, his own immediately available forces proved considerably less, than his information led him to calculate on. Hence there was no alternative but prompt and continued retreat. Napoleon's one object was to bring on a great battle, which would as he believed be decisive. He thus practically lost the initiative, and could only follow the enemy, whose line of retreat was naturally towards the centre of the empire. In that boundless plain there were no defensive positions that could not be turned, no strategic points which it was vital to retain. Not until the Russians were within seventy miles of Moscow did they turn to bay at Borodino. By that time Napoleon had penetrated nearly 500 miles into Russia, and had expended three quarters of his enormous army in losses of all kinds, in guarding his long line of communication, and through the necessity of detaching large forces to face subsidiary Russian armies to north and south. The troops still under his immediate command were not much stronger than his immediate opponents, and the victory was very dearly purchased and not decisive. In fact it was disguised defeat; it opened the road to Moscow, but it left Napoleon no strength to go further. He owed his total ruin to his own obstinacy, to clinging to the belief that the Tzar would sue for peace, and thereby leaving time for Russian reinforcements to come in and for the winter to draw near. The failure of his expedition was however complete, though, if he had quitted Moscow at once, he might have saved the relics of it; and under the geographical conditions failure was inevitable from the first unless the Tzar's courage gave way. Any one knowing what we know now of the relative numbers, and of the resolute temper of the Russian nation, might have predicted the course of the campaign, the measure of success that the invader would attain, and, if he

had also known Napoleon's character, the thoroughness of his overthrow.

In the next year the geographical position of Austria was again of vital importance. Prussia had risen as one man to join the advancing Russians. Austria was not yet ready to take the field with effect, perhaps was not quite sure where her true interest lay. At any rate she remained ostentatiously neutral, while the spring campaign of 1813 was fought out in north Germany, resulting in considerable success for Napoleon. Then Austria joined the allies, and her position on the flank of both parties made her intervention all the weightier. Napoleon struggled hard, relying on his own genius and the probable lack of concert among his enemies. He even won a great victory at Dresden, which was mainly due to an advantage given him by the topography[1], but it proved hardly a temporary relief. If when Austria entered the field against him he had recognized that his position in Saxony was untenable, and retired towards the Rhine, he would have had a good chance, in spite of the superior numbers of his enemies. As it was, he gathered his whole strength to Leipsic, on which the hostile armies converged, and sustained a crushing defeat.

[1] This is described at p. 109.

CHAPTER XX

THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

The Mediterranean Sea was well fitted to be the cradle of civilization. The inhabitants of more northern climes have in fact outstripped, during recent centuries, the peoples round its shores; and there is a widespread belief that the less genial climate is on the whole more favourable to human progress. The greater his needs, it is thought, the more man will exert himself, provided that the natural conditions are not rigorous enough to stunt him intellectually, or physically, or both. It may be that this generalization is based on too scanty materials; it may be that it is true only on the condition which in fact has existed, that the northern peoples are specially fitted to develop and carry forward civilization which perhaps they could not have originated. At any rate all the essential elements in our modern life, religion and government, arts and sciences, philosophy and poetry, did begin on the shores of the Mediterranean.

The peculiar shape of the inland sea obviously facilitated human intercourse round its coasts, in ages when it was a risk for vessels to venture out of sight of land. Between Asia Minor and the easternmost of the three European peninsulas the sea is thickly studded with islands: it was easy for Ionia to be as Greek as Hellas. Between the Greek and Italian peninsulas the Adriatic forms a long

narrow gulf, which could be crossed even by ships that must be beached at night. The great projection on the African shore, near the angle of which stood Carthage, comes very near to Sicily, itself separated by the narrowest of straits from Italy. The Mediterranean is thus divided into two basins; and though the western one is less broken in outline, it has in its midst the two large islands of Corsica and Sardinia. Finally, the entrance by the straits of Gibraltar, though wide enough for maritime convenience, excludes the great waves of the Atlantic: the storms of the Mediterranean, though occasionally fierce, are of home production and usually brief.

The northern coast of Africa has a wide strip of cultivable land, some of it very fertile, beyond which lies the desert. In the days when the Mediterranean was a Roman lake, north Africa flourished greatly, but it has never recovered from the devastation that began with the break-up of the Empire, and was continued through the Arab conquest which severed it entirely from Christendom. It possesses neither the civilized population, nor perhaps the depth of really habitable territory, which might render a state of the modern type possible there. France has within comparatively recent years established her dominion over a large section of north Africa, and this is obviously of some value to France, as improving her maritime position in the western Mediterranean. Very little progress has, however, been made in really bringing the country once more within the European pale: Algeria is still an Arab land, though with a thick veneer of French civilization.

Carthage in earlier times was a great power, and its admirable position, just where the two basins of the Mediterranean meet, gave it every advantage, ample in ages when a single city with its appendages was the commonest type of independent political unit. Geographical situation made it easy for Carthage, assuming that she possessed the

requisite energy, to dominate the western Mediterranean with her fleets, to found colonies in Spain, hitherto outside the pale of civilization, and to establish, not without severe conflict against Greek rivals, a preponderating influence in Sicily. That she was worsted by Rome in a struggle on which was staked, though the combatants knew it not, the leadership of the civilized world, was due rather to other causes than to geography, except so far as Rome had the support of kindred peoples in Italy, while Carthage had little to correspond.

Egypt is of course to be excepted from this general account of north Africa. It is even more completely dependent on geography, but in another manner. The Nile, as has been truly said, constitutes Egypt. Outside the space fertilized by the Nile flood there is mere desert: within it is the seat of what apparently was the oldest of civilizations. There is no other instance of a country so entirely the creature of a single geographical condition. The Ganges is the main artery of Bengal, the Yang-tse-kiang of central China, the Danube of the Austrian monarchy; but none of them possess a fraction of the relative importance of the Nile. Egypt has also its access to the Red Sea, and thereby to the distant east: and it has a way by land into western Asia, across a very troublesome strip of desert. These things are however trifling in comparison to the Nile, without which there would have been no Egypt to trade or to make war.

From time immemorial Asia and Africa (to use these words in their modern sense, so as to include the entire continents) have been considered to meet on the isthmus of Suez, and Europe and Asia to be separated by the waters leading to the Black Sea. Nor could geography select more appropriate boundaries, all things considered. As a matter of historical fact, however, Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor have all been more concerned with Europe and

with one another than with the rest of Asia or Africa. Geographical facts are largely accountable for this separateness, by no means continuous or complete, yet holding good during a great part of history. Egypt, with desert to the west of the Nile valley, has practically her nearest land neighbours in Asia. The desert between the broad and fertile strip of Syrian coast and the Mesopotamian rivers tended to force Syria into connexion with Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean generally. It was a definite step downwards, a virtual renunciation of any claim to be a great power within the European sphere, when the Abbassides removed the seat of the Khalifate from Damascus to Bagdad in 762. So also Asia Minor, while its harbours and the many islands of the Archipelago invited to maritime intercourse westwards, and the Black Sea gives access from its northern ports both to the Mediterranean and to the Danube region, is greatly cut off from the rest of Asia by the mountains which, beginning in the Taurus, stretch northeastwards across to Armenia, even though these mountains are by no means impassable.

Italy and the other European countries touching the Mediterranean have been discussed in previous chapters. It remains to say something of the easternmost of the three great peninsulas. The method which has been adopted, of dividing up Europe according to the marked watersheds, includes the northern portion of the peninsula, above the Balkan chain, in the Danube region. The Balkans, however, though they can only be turned at the eastern end, where the narrowness of the gap between the hills and the Black Sea gives importance to Varna, can be readily crossed, as all history shows. They are an obstacle, across which it costs much for an army to force a passage in face of real resistance, as the campaign of 1877 bore witness. At the same time they are just the sort of mountain chain which a skilful assailant can make sure of forcing. The possible

routes across it are so many that adequate defence of all is out of the question, unless with a total of forces far greater than the enemy can bring into the field. The Russians in 1877 pretty easily seized the first pass that they made for; it was mainly their mismanagement, and consequent heavy losses elsewhere, that so long delayed their further advance.

The Balkans proved their reality as an obstacle, and their inefficiency as a barrier, during several centuries of the history of the Eastern empire. When the real Bulgarians, a race probably Turkish, made their first appearance in Europe, they established a kingdom on the lower Danube, with the prior Slav inhabitants as subjects. Against them the Eastern empire was able on the whole to hold the line of the Balkans, and found no difficulty, when its energies revived at a later date, in crossing the mountains to reconquer its former territories, though these were again lost a century later. As the final result, the lands north of the Balkans retained the Bulgarian name, though the Bulgarian people had been practically swamped in the multitude of their Slav subjects, had adopted a Slavonic tongue, and rank to this day as Slavs in national sentiment.

The history of the Balkan peninsula is in most respects what geography would render probable. The mountains running down the west coast have repeatedly served as shelter, and not to one race only. The little city republic of Ragusa, originally of Greek foundation, lived on into the nineteenth century. The Albanians held out long against the conquering Ottomans. The Slavs of Montenegro managed to preserve their practical independence through the zenith of the Ottoman power, until in our own day it was formally recognized. The land being open on the north-east, successive floods of invaders entered it from the regions north of the Black Sea, sometimes crossing the Balkans and sometimes not. The Slav immigration into

Greece in the early Middle Ages bade fair to supplant the Greeks altogether; but the tide ebbed again, and Greek national sentiment revived as strong as ever, though it is doubtful what proportion of the present inhabitants can be correctly described as of Greek race. The Ottomans alone came across from Asia Minor in the height of their conquering vigour, and rapidly extended their sway far beyond the Balkans. It is intelligible, in view of the total dissimilarity between the Turks and their subjects in language, religion and customs, that the ordinary anticipation, that the two would gradually fuse, should not have been verified. The remarkable thing is that Greeks and Bulgarians, alike in many respects, and especially in common subjection to alien masters, should have remained obstinately separate. In Thrace and Macedonia, where a land-way leads east and west between the Rhodope mountains and the sea, the majority of the inhabitants are probably Greek, but their villages are mixed up with Turkish and Bulgarian villages. They live in juxtaposition, so that geographical lines cannot be drawn, marking out one section of the country as Greek, another as Bulgarian, and another as Turkish; but there is no tendency to union. Like oil and water, they fail to blend, however much they are artificially mixed.

The southern portion of the Balkan peninsula corresponds fairly well to the Greece of classical antiquity. The whole country is mountainous, so that the fertile districts are small, and more or less isolated from one another. This favoured the ancient Greek tendency towards separate city states, though in view of all the facts we cannot assume that the geographical conditions originated this tendency. We find independent cities on the Boeotian plain and on the open coast of Asia Minor, united, if at all beyond mere alliance, in forced subjection to one of their number. Whether caused by the geographical conditions or not, this one fact

dominates the history of Greece throughout its palmy days. The separate city life developed an amount of energy which almost conceals the smallness of the country, and of the total population involved, great though that must have been in proportion to the number of cultivable square miles. After the Macedonian conquest the Greek character changed. Under a long continuance of foreign rule, the Greeks developed other qualities: their influence remained great in arts and literature, but not in arms. Though after the fall of the Western empire the Greek language became gradually preponderant in the Eastern, it was on the whole not the Greeks who fought and ruled. The sentiment of nationality, such as there was, identified itself with Rome, and had its seat in Constantinople, a cosmopolitan city, not in Athens. Thus for every reason there is very little in Greek history that calls for comment from the geographical point of view, with one remarkable exception. The most splendid incident in Greek military annals, the defence of Thermopylae[1] against the Persians, depended entirely on a geographical condition now changed. The famous pass between Mount Oeta and the sea, which gave the only convenient road into southern Greece, has now been extended by the receding of the sea to a plain some two miles wide.

The sea of course played a very important part both in the development and in the expansion of the Greeks. Concerning the previous race, if indeed it was distinct, of which recent discoveries give intimation, we know nothing but what archaeology can tell. Nor again is there anything, beyond inferences from similar sources of information, to determine the extent and nature of the Greek debt to

[1] I am quite aware that modern scepticism tends to deny the historical truth of the story of Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans; but the legend, if it be such, could not have arisen unless some stand had been made at Thermopylae, which would now be impossible without great numbers.

Egypt and to Phoenicia. The legend of Cadmus, for instance, may merely clothe the truth, or may distort, or even totally misrepresent it. There could easily be, and in fact there was, much maritime intercourse about the eastern Mediterranean. It was at the very dawn of authentic history that the Greeks were beginning to found colonies also westwards. They were planted thickly on the Italian side of the Adriatic, round the coasts of Sicily, in one small portion of north Africa, and for a little way up the west coast of Italy. Whether they were unable to establish themselves in face of the Etruscan, and later of the Carthaginian power, or whether they would not venture on more and more distant enterprises, certain it is that Greek settlements beyond Naples were few, widely scattered, and mostly unimportant. The one exception is Marseilles, and it is perhaps not fanciful to attribute its permanent prosperity partly to the exceptional energy of the Phocaeans, who reinforced the original settlers not long after the foundation, and who had had the courage to abandon their Ionian home *en masse* rather than submit to Persia.

The three great islands of the western Mediterranean all belong to Italy by geographical position, as well as on the whole by affinities of race and language. Of these Sardinia was an early possession of Rome, and has ever since been in one way or another closely connected with the mainland of Italy, though Napoleon III did make a discreditable attempt, happily unsuccessful, to procure the island for France. Corsica, equally Italian in affinities, had a similar history to Sardinia until in the eighteenth century it was annexed by France.

The third great island, Sicily, though the nearest to Italy, has had in fact the most distinct history, and to this its geographical position has greatly contributed. Situated in the very centre of the Mediterranean, it has been a tempting prize to almost every people that has from time to time

been strong in Mediterranean waters. Greeks or Carthaginians colonized nearly the whole of its coasts: both alike fell under the dominion of Rome. The Saracens got a footing there: a Norman adventurer made himself master of the whole island, and his successor inherited the other Norman acquisitions in south Italy. Then Sicily fell into the hands of the king of Aragon, ultimately becoming part of the Spanish empire, whence it returned, as a result of diplomatic arrangement, to its natural connexion with south Italy. The connexion is, however, obvious and natural only from the physical point of view, and to a certain extent in language. The successive settlement of foreign races on the island has made of the Sicilians a very mixed race, having but little affinity to the real Italians in blood or in ideas.

[On the recent political division of the Balkan peninsula see Chap. XXIII.—Ed.]

CHAPTER XXI

INDIA

India has been called the Asiatic Italy, though it is of course very much larger, having about the same area as Europe without Russia. The points of resemblance are indeed both numerous and striking, while there are also differences that go deep. India, like Italy, has a peninsular portion girt by the sea, and a continental portion shut off from the land beyond by great mountains. Like Italy, it has a large island close to its southern extremity, and there is no doubt that of the various races found in Ceylon the earlier ones successively made their way thither out of India, while some elements of the population were introduced later through maritime trade leading to alien settlements. The 'Moormen' of Ceylon correspond to the Greeks and Carthaginians of Sicily, though the analogy is not perfect. There is no trace of Ceylon having exercised reciprocal influence on India, such as Sicily exercised on Italy, and the reason is mainly geographical. Beyond Ceylon is the open ocean, whereas Sicily is near to the southern shore of the Mediterranean, and attracted Carthaginian and other enterprise. Unlike Italy, India has had no maritime history of its own: there is but one really good harbour in over 2,000 miles of coast.

The most marked feature of resemblance to Italy lies in the conformation of the mountains which separate India

from the mass of Asia. Lofty as they are they do not form a complete barrier: they allow access at many points, though not everywhere. It is through the gaps in the mountains that successive waves of invasion have penetrated India, like Italy, in historic and semi-historic times, there being little or nothing to show whence came the previous pre-historic inhabitants. India too is, even more than Italy, a 'geographical expression': it has never till very recently had a separate political existence, nor do the political limits even now exactly coincide, any more than in Italy, with the natural frontiers. The very name is unknown to the bulk of its inhabitants, being apparently a foreign generalization derived from the Indus, the greatest but hardly the most important of its rivers. It has never evolved a dominant organism like the Roman empire, or the Church which was in some sense the heir of the empire, to bring about anything like unity, even in language or in creed.

Peninsular India, which is a roughly equilateral triangle, has like South America a mountain backbone close to the western coast, and its rivers consequently run eastwards. The whole region is more or less elevated, but the mountains rise to no great height, though steep enough on the western side to isolate more or less completely the narrow strip of coast. These mountains, known by the general name of the Western Ghats, with the forests which stretch down from them, were the original seat of the Maratha power, which in its humble beginning needed all the protection afforded by difficult country. This may be said to be the only instance in which the natural features of the interior of the country had a marked positive influence on its history, though the lack of harbours had of course a great negative effect.

The Vindhya hills and their continuations, which form the northern escarpment of the peninsular plateau, running about the line of the tropic of Cancer, separate it sharply

enough from the continental plain to the north. They are, however, by no means high or continuous enough to form an actual barrier. The Marathas found no difficulty in dominating much of the northern plain; the Mogul emperors, whose seat of government was at Delhi, extended their authority far into the Deccan.

The plain of continental India is practically unbroken for something like 1,500 miles from east to west. All the eastern part, which is fertile and very populous, drains into the head of the Bay of Bengal through the Ganges, whose many tributaries flow down from the Himalayas and from the Vindhya hills. The watershed between its westernmost affluents and the Indus basin is in fact marked much less by height, for the ground barely rises to 1,000 feet above the sea, than by the desert which climatic conditions happen to cause just there. The Himalayas on the north are so lofty as to be from the historical point of view impassable, though a few routes are known by which a small amount of trade is carried on; and by one of these was conducted with immense labour the military expedition which it was deemed necessary to send in 1904 into Tibet. They are not however a single range like the Alps, but rather a vast mountain region, with parallel chains gradually sinking lower and lower into the plain. This hill region is of great importance in the present condition of India, since it contains the *sanatoria* which enable the English garrison of India to endure the heat of the plains.

North of the upper Ganges basin, the Himalayas begin to curve away to the north, and run up towards the extremely elevated region of the Pamirs, known as the roof of the world. Southward from the Pamirs, at an acute angle with the Karakoram range, which is in effect a continuation of the Himalayas, a belt of mountain country stretches down to the Indian ocean. The name of Suleiman mountains is sometimes given to the whole, though it properly belongs

only to the central portion, which is the historically important part. This range has not the simple construction of the Alpine chain, and therefore admits of some uncertainty as to the exact line at which, on geographical principles, the frontier of India should be drawn. But apart from detail it forms, like the Alps, an unmistakeable natural frontier, and also like the Alps admits of easy passage at certain points. The Indus drains the whole of north-western India, and its basin contains almost every variety of climate, from the burning deserts near the sea to the equally inhospitable abodes of snow up under the Pamirs. Thence, as has been already said, the way is open either to the Ganges or southwards into the Deccan. The crucial question has always been that of access to the Indus basin from outside.

The mountains which surround the upper part of the Indus valley are neither more nor less impassable than the central Pyrenees, or the Alps between the Simplon and the St. Bernard. That is to say, individuals can cross them if they will face the hardships, and are equipped to overcome the difficulties; but for a migrating nation or an organized army[1], or for commerce on any but the smallest scale they are an insuperable barrier. The conditions however alter considerably, further to the south. Near the northern and southern extremities of the Suleiman mountains proper are two famous passes, the Khaibar and the Bolan, which need separate mention. The Khaibar is the defile through which the Cabul river descends to the Indus; but instead of following the river throughout, the route is carried over the hills in the neck of a great loop made by the river. It has been

[1] One of the novels fashionable on the Continent of late years, describing a future conquest of Britain, begins by making a complete Russian army appear suddenly after reaching the upper Indus unobserved, cut off the English force holding the Khaibar, and surprise the great bridge at Attock. If our enemies wait till they can accomplish this feat, the British empire is safe against attack for some time to come.

in all ages the main route out of central Asia into India, and in itself is not difficult. That is to say, invaders in full possession of Afghanistan, with no prospect of having their exit into India opposed, could pass freely. As a matter of historical fact those conditions repeated themselves again and again. India offered a rich and easy prey: the invaders entered to take possession, not to carry on elaborate war across the frontier; and the hill tribes either let them pass once for all, or joined in the quest of plunder. Whether a civilized army with all its train could pass through the Khaibar in face of another civilized army is another question entirely. That English armies have penetrated it proves nothing in favour of such a venture, any more than the fact that an English force once met with a great disaster there proves the contrary.

Somewhat different is the case of the Bolan pass. As a route into India it is more circuitous than the Khaibar, but almost equally accessible should the contingency be realized, which alarmists profess to expect at any moment, of Russia completely mastering Afghanistan and proceeding thence to invade India. The Indian frontier has in fact been pushed in this quarter beyond the Suleiman mountains, and a military post has been established at Quetta, to which railways have been constructed both through the Bolan and by a contiguous pass. On purely geographical grounds this may well be held to be a mistake. If the contingency came to pass, Quetta would be a direct challenge to Russian attack, could not be abandoned without giving the impression of a serious defeat, and could with difficulty be defended at so great a distance from India, though something has been done by the railway to diminish this difficulty. Whether the fact that Russia is not in possession of Afghanistan, and that our occupation of Quetta gives us greater influence over the Ameer and greater facility in aiding him if he invoked our assistance, is an adequate reason for our

holding the place, is a question not of geography but of politics.

The history of India before very modern times is based entirely on two geographical facts; the north-western frontier was passable, and invaders, once across it, found no physical barriers to limit their advance. The Aryan immigration more than a thousand years B.C. found dark-skinned men in occupation of the peninsula, and yellow Mongolians, who had possibly entered at the north-eastern corner where there is no serious mountain barrier, possessing at any rate the Ganges basin. Like the Anglo-Saxons in England, they destroyed or drove into remote hills the bulk of the previous Mongolian population. Like the Anglo-Saxons in Scotland, they more or less penetrated with their influence, but did not oust, the dark races of the south. Alexander the Great's famous invasion was a mere raid: he came through the same north-western mountains, but he never went beyond the Indus basin. Whoever the Scythians were, who are said by Greek authorities to have entered India later, they doubtless followed Alexander's example. It was not till two thousand years or more after the great Aryan immigration that a real new element was introduced into the small separate world of India. Then began the long series of invasions and conquests, more or less extensive, more or less ephemeral, by Mohammedan rulers from beyond the Suleiman mountains. One despot after another established himself in Afghanistan, or further off still, and poured his hosts into India through the ever open door of the Khaibar pass. A new element was thus added to the population, which was on the whole of far greater weight than mere numbers would explain. For the Mohammedan religion entered with them, and seems to have attracted the more active and restless among the Hindu population, mainly peaceful and agricultural, and bound down by the tyranny of caste. Mohammedans were numerous among the military adventurers who

succeeded in founding new states, or usurping the mastery of old ones, in a country which had never imagined any other form of government than despotism. There is nothing in the geographical or social conditions to prevent such states from growing up anywhere, extending as far as their rulers' fighting energies allowed, and disappearing when those rulers degenerated.

Ultimately the Moguls established a power more durable and more extensive than any previous state, thanks partly to the exceptional qualities of some of the Mogul emperors, thanks also to the fortunate loss of their territories beyond the Suleiman mountains. Their supremacy, however, was never carried over the whole of peninsular India: the Maratha power indeed had began to grow up before the Mogul empire had reached its utmost limits. Sivaji, the founder of the latter, represented a reaction, mainly religious but partly also racial, against Mohammedan domination: but otherwise the Marathas were purely military. Beginning in the Deccan, they spread over a great part of the northern plain, from time to time virtually mastering the decadent Moguls, and again suffering defeat from fresh invaders from beyond the Suleimans.

Such was the state of things, when for the first time in history the destinies of India began to depend on the sea. The discovery of the Cape route by Vasco de Gama marks the dawn of the new era, though more than two centuries elapsed before the effects were seriously felt. One European nation after another began trading with India by sea, and managed to establish settlements on the coast, with no purpose beyond security for their commerce. Those on the western side had no political significance, being cut off by the Western Ghats from the interior of the peninsula: it was only at a much later date, and under totally changed conditions, that Bombay rose to importance. On the eastern side there was nothing to isolate the European settlements

from their neighbours in the Deccan. When in the middle of the eighteenth century Dupleix saw his opportunity, in the distracted and unstable state of Indian politics, of winning paramount influence for France, Pondicherri, the French head quarters, was well situated for the purpose. Geography, to say the least, did not impede Dupleix' policy: and when Dupleix, striving to expel the English, found that he had only opened the way for a stronger man than himself, the centre of European influence was merely shifted a short distance to the English settlement of Madras.

Clive's conquest of lower Bengal, which inevitably led by gradual steps to the British conquest of India, was the victory of coherent and disciplined strength. Here, as in other parts of the world, the civilized power has found itself virtually compelled to extend and consolidate its sway: and whether or not the benefits accruing to a conquered population through peace and good government are a justification for conquest, British rule in India has at least nothing to fear from comparison with similar cases elsewhere. Geography is indeed concerned, but only indirectly: the unwarlike character of the Bengalis, which facilitated the first stage of British advance, was the fruit of long ages of submission to foreign conquerors, against whom nature had given them no shield. There were racial and religious differences, which on the whole helped towards the conquest, but these existed rather in spite of the geographical openness of the whole country. The natural features no doubt influenced to some extent the course of the English wars against Mysore, against the Marathas, against the Sikhs, but no more than such things must influence all campaigns. It was only when the English had extended their sway to the Indus basin, and found themselves on the natural north-western frontier, that their progress began to raise a definite geographical problem.

The transformation is thus complete. India, whose history during many ages was altogether a land history, whose

various peoples have always been entirely averse to the sea [1], is now under the government of a distant power, whose base is the sea, and which cannot reach India by land. A better illustration of the far-reaching and flexible character of sea power cannot be desired. England cares little for the inhospitable character of much of the Indian coast, which in the past contributed to make the native peoples non-maritime. She can land her troops or her merchandise at such points as are convenient, and those places, like Bombay, become great cities; though it is of course only on condition of retaining command of the sea that she could continue to do so during war time.

The north-western frontier of India presents in its most complicated form the problem that has to be faced by all civilized states which have territories abutting on barbarism total or comparative. Uncivilized neighbours must be debarred from brigandage or other forms of aggression, and the influence exerted to put down lawlessness is very easily carried a step further. If there are no physical barriers, such extension of control and gradually of actual sovereignty is almost inevitable, as the whole history of British rule in India testifies. Even a barrier so formidable as the Himalayas may not exclude all possibility of trouble from beyond it, as was exemplified in the necessity recently arising for an expedition into Tibet. If the frontier be not a continuous wall, but a belt of mountain land, penetrable at certain points but difficult to occupy, and inhabited by fierce tribes who are little amenable to external influence, it becomes much harder to establish a permanent frontier line, and to maintain peace along it. The civilized power has obvious motives for and against advance, which may be felt with varying strength

[1] Europe no doubt knew of India and received Indian products, both in antiquity and during the Middle Ages, mainly through maritime channels: but the communication seems to have been carried on by foreigners visiting India and not by natives.

by the persons who from time to time direct its counsels, and geography will be only one of several factors. Nor is the difficulty lessened if behind the frontier tribes lies a nondescript state like Afghanistan, though its character is changed. The obvious interest of the British empire in India is that Afghanistan should become a civilized state in the European sense, with a stable government willing and able to observe treaties, and to behave in all respects as a peaceful neighbour. How far treating Afghanistan as such will make it such in reality is the question, and on this geography has but little to say.

The chief importance of the north-western problem, at any rate in the eyes of one school of Indian statesmen, consists in the fact that beyond Afghanistan lies Russia, already in possession of those central Asiatic regions out of which in past ages invaders have repeatedly reached India. Russia, a great and expanding power, must, it is said, cherish designs on India. Whether this be true or not, the policy of building up a civilized and friendly Afghanistan, if it can be pursued effectively, is suited to both alternatives. If a Russian attack on India should come, the question of how to meet it is primarily a military one, and what seems the right answer to-day may possibly not be applicable if circumstances change. All that geography can say is that past history tells nothing, for India has never before possessed anything like political unity, or the resources of civilization brought over sea. Until Russia can absorb Afghanistan it is virtually impossible for her to bring to the Khaibar gate an army capable under modern conditions of attempting such an enterprise. And there would still remain the problem of forcing that gate in the face of an army of the same type.

CHAPTER XXII

AMERICA

The history of America covers but a short period, and the political conditions have been peculiar. It furnishes few instances, similar to those afforded in abundance by European history, of the influence of geography on the political destinies of nations. Though the whole of South America, except the European settlements in Guiana, is now partitioned among independent nations, they are all of one type; and their turbulent annals record few events of interest from the geographical point of view. The same holds good of the southern portion of North America: the descendants of the Spanish conquerors have mingled with the natives, and have formed states like their southern neighbours, with a similar veneer of modern civilization largely due to immigrants from Europe, and a similar *substratum* of comparative barbarism. The United States were saved by the triumph of the North in the war of secession from breaking up into separate nations, so that a single government rules the whole centre of the continent from ocean to ocean. Similarly the whole of America north of the United States is occupied by the single Dominion of Canada, loyal to the British crown, but in other respects an independent nation. The frontier between the two is in most of its length absolutely conventional, but happily there have been only trifling wars upon it.

The geography of North America to some extent accounts for the fact that two great nations now occupy the whole of it, north of the comparatively narrow portion which tapers

down to the isthmus of Panama. The Rocky mountains, which form the watershed between the Atlantic and Pacific, run close to the western side of the continent. East of them is one boundless plain, not of course altogether flat, but containing no chain of mountains long or high enough to form a definite barrier. Even the Alleghanies are not hard to cross, and sink away into the plain at each end. Thus when the white men, having settled along the Atlantic coast, began to push their way westward, they encountered no geographical obstacles. The question as to which of the European peoples should dominate America was fought out before the great expansion began. English colonies occupied all the central part of the coast, but had not extended far beyond the Alleghanies when they revolted and became a separate nation, soon afterwards absorbing the French colony on the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico. England meanwhile had conquered the French colony of Canada, then limited to the lower part of the St. Lawrence basin. This district is still mainly French in race and language; but the vast regions to the westward, from the eastern end of the great lakes to the Pacific, know no tongue but English, and till recently contained few immigrants of other races. In the United States there has been a much greater admixture; but the population[1], save for the Irish element, is substantially Teutonic, with English for the universal language.

Thus two contiguous peoples, closely akin in race and tradition and in all that these imply, were in the same position: they had before them the prospect of indefinite expansion, at the cost of getting rid of the aborigines, thinly scattered over the whole area, whom they were neither able nor desirous to convert into slaves. Before both alike the red men disappeared: they were incapable of assimilating civilization,

[1] The negro element in the United States, large as it is, may be ignored: the black men count for nothing in the gradual supplanting of the red men by the white.

and have in great measure died out, there having been practically no admixture of races. The analogy is very close with many of the movements of pre-historic man, when newcomers expropriated the old inhabitants, driving them out or destroying them, but enslaving or otherwise absorbing only a few. Civilized man works by different means, and with less definite intention to destroy; but the result is the same. In Latin America we have a modern instance of the other type of conquest, the more common one within times even vaguely historic. The European conquerors made the natives their subjects, more or less their slaves; but they came merely as conquerors, not as settlers. They brought with them comparatively few women of their own race, and in process of no long time they blended with the natives, to whom, as was natural, they imparted their laws and language. The result has been less successful than the fusion of (for instance) the conquering Franks with the romanized Celts of Gaul.

The most important event in American history since the discovery by Columbus, at any rate the most far reaching in its consequences, depends essentially on geography. In the middle of the eighteenth century the English colonies occupied the east coast, from near the mouth of the St. Lawrence southwards, and part of the north shore of the Gulf of Mexico. The French colony of Louisiana held the lower course of the Mississippi, and the French colony of Canada extended some way up the St. Lawrence. The French formed a plan for making these separate possessions join hands behind the back, as it were, of the English colonies, which at that time had not extended much farther westwards than the barrier formed by the Appalachian highlands. The Ohio rises not far from the eastern end of the great lakes, and drains the western slope of the highlands. The French established trading posts, which were also forts, down the course of this river, that flows at an acute angle to the

Mississippi, the source of which is near the western end of the chain of lakes. This was a matter of life and death to the English colonies, and a war began which ended in the conquest of Canada, and the extinction of all chance that the New World should be dominated by France. Pittsburg, on the Ohio, the city which has taken the place of the French Fort Duquesne, still recalls the name of the great minister who steered England through the Seven Years' war. Delivered from hostile neighbours on the north, the English colonies were free to revolt against what they deemed the oppression of the mother-country. Once independent they expanded rapidly westwards, as at a rather later date did Canada, which remained subject to the British crown. Thus it is no great exaggeration to say that the whole destiny of North America turned upon the opportunity given to the French, by the lie of the Ohio river, to threaten the safety of the British colonies along the Atlantic coast.

Geography, if we use the word in its wider sense, so as to include influences of climate and the like, is largely responsible for the presence in the United States of the negro. The tobacco, which was the chief product exported by the southern colonies, like the sugar of the West Indies, and the cotton which later became even more important, could not in that climate be cultivated by white labour[1]. The aboriginal inhabitants had no aptitude for industry, and the momentous step was taken of importing negroes from Africa. In that age it was inevitable that they should be slaves, and a great burden of wrong and trouble was thereby accumulated. Conjecture is fruitless as to what might to-day have been the condition of the American negroes if they had from the first been free immigrants; but it is fairly

[1] It has been asserted of late years, in defence of the Australian determination to keep a 'white Australia,' that white men can successfully cultivate tropical and semi-tropical products, like cotton and sugar. But even if they can, it is doubtful whether many will be found willing to try the experiment.

certain that without them the regions round the Gulf of Mexico would have remained a wilderness.

The presence of these negro slaves was the most prominent result of the many economic and social differences which had their roots in the contrasted geographical conditions of the northern and southern states, and determined the outbreak and course of the Civil War. The slave-holding states occupied the broad continuous lowland which borders the Gulf of Mexico and the southern half of the Atlantic coast of the Union. This is a region of low relief and deep fertile soils, with a relatively enervating climate of hot summers, mild winters, and rain in all seasons. Here the methods of exploitation which proved most profitable to the early settlers led to the establishment of large plantations cultivated by slave labour, and the dominant section of the population was the class of aristocratic land- (and slave-) owners. The northern states occupied an area of similar extent which was not cut off by any distinct physical features, since in fact the Ohio river was wholly under northern control throughout the contest, but which differs in many respects. The northern territory is far more rugged; the greater part of it was overridden by ice during the last glacial period, and is characterized by the irregular relief and generally difficult soils of a glaciated region, and it has an invigorating climate of cold winters and warm summers, with rather less rain than the south. The vast semi-arid region west of the hundredth meridian was then unorganized, and took no direct part in the war, except that it supplied some recruits to the northern armies. The northern territory, particularly in those north-eastern states which led the opposition to slavery, was wholly unsuitable to plantation culture, and incapable of growing cotton, while its cold winters forbade the importation of negroes for field-work. The whole of the Appalachian highlands belonged rather to the North than to the South in climate and soil conditions, and therefore in social and political sym-

pathies. In the northern states the land was distributed in comparatively small farms, which were usually cultivated by their owners, and the crops and occupations were much more varied than on the southern plantations, while the population contained neither slaves nor an aristocratic land-owning class. When immigration from Europe set in on a considerable scale in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, the immigrants naturally avoided the slave states, while those southern whites who were not land-owners also tended to migrate to the free states. The resultant growth of population and wealth was thus concentrated in the North; by 1860 the South had lost its original predominance in the Union, and in 1861 the attempted secession precipitated the Civil War.

Just as few wars have been in their origin more directly attributable to geographical conditions, which here caused the conceptions of human freedom to progress at such different rates in contiguous areas, so few have shown more clearly the influence of those conditions on their progress. The geological uniformity and almost purely agricultural basis of the South, in contrast to the more varied surface and occupations of the North, ensured from the first the northern superiority in industrial and naval resources, and made the naval blockade a deadly weapon. The southward extension of the highlands thrust into the otherwise compact area of the South a broad wedge of difficult and hostile country, which hampered its communications and severed the eastern and western theatres of war.

In the western area the dominant geographical feature is the lower Mississippi, winding along a thousand mile course from the confluence of the Ohio to the Gulf, and at that time unbridged. The main stream roughly bisects the area, and it and its larger tributaries were then the principal routes of transport. Hence the war was here a struggle for the control of the rivers, and the attack necessarily demanded

the constant co-operation of land and naval forces, both downstream and up from the Gulf. The Mississippi meanders in a wide flood plain of its own alluvium, and only at some half-dozen places at which it swings right to the edge of this plain is there high ground near the water whence artillery could command the passage. Each of these commanding bluffs was in turn fortified and held by the southern forces; but in the upper section the lower part of the Tennessee river is roughly parallel to the main stream, and the successful advance of northern fleets and armies up the Tennessee in turn isolated the garrisons on the Mississippi bluffs and compelled their evacuation as far south as Memphis. The one important bluff south of this point is that on which Vicksburg stands, 200 feet above the river: in the hands of the South this town ensured their communications with their three western states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, even after New Orleans had fallen, and prevented their enemies from using the river for through transport; hence the capture of Vicksburg was one of the decisive operations of the war.

The town stands on a high bluff on the eastern bank, at the foot of which the river Yazoo joins the main stream; hence, after the failure of a direct attack, General Grant took his army past on the west of the river, and crossed it to land on the east bank south of the town, thus avoiding the need of fighting his way across the marshes of the Yazoo, but at the same time cutting off his own forces from their base of supplies on the Mississippi to the north until he had driven the enemy into the town and could reach the east bank again. The subsequent siege did not differ materially from similar operations elsewhere.

In the eastern theatre the war was fought over the central part of the coastal plain, mainly in Virginia between the rival capitals of Washington and Richmond. This plain is crossed by a series of parallel rivers, flowing south-eastward

into Chesapeake bay, each of which formed an obstacle to every advance northward or southward, so that a large proportion of the battles were fought at river crossings. In this respect the area is akin to the Lombard plain, and the strategical conditions resembled those discussed in an earlier chapter (XIII). There are, however, two considerable differences in the geographical features: east of Virginia is the sheltered waterway of Chesapeake bay, by which the northern forces could at any time land an army on the flank of the main advance: west of the plain, and separated from it only by the Blue Ridge, in which there are many gaps through which armies can pass, is the broad trench of the Shenandoah valley, forming a land route by which it was also possible to outflank the positions in the plain. The plain narrows to the north, so that armies moving northward in the Shenandoah valley were also converging on Washington, while those moving southward along it were not thereby approaching Richmond. The first great attack by the northern armies under McClellan, in 1862, was made from the Bay up the York and James rivers towards Richmond; it failed mainly because the use of this route left Washington exposed, and Stonewall Jackson's brilliant campaign down the Shenandoah valley compelled the diversion of a large part of McClellan's forces to defend the northern capital. The danger was so great that subsequent advances kept to the centre of the plain, so that the army could cover Washington. The transverse river next southward from the open estuary of the Potomac is the Rappahannock; this was naturally the chief defensive line; in their attempts to advance across it the northern armies suffered disastrous defeats at Fredericksburg in the fall of 1862 and at Chancellorsville in 1863, but succeeded in the Battles of the Wilderness (1864).. The chief invasions of Union territory made by the southern forces were directed along the Shenandoah valley in 1862 and 1863, when General Lee invaded

Pennsylvania, only to meet defeat at Gettysburg in the latter year, though he succeeded in again diverting the northern armies from their attack on Richmond. By 1864, however, the North had a sufficient superiority of numbers available to clear the valley without weakening their forces on the main front, and this advance succeeded.

One other feature of the Civil War deserves notice. It was the first occasion on which railways played an important part over a large area. Railway transport had been employed in the Franco-Austrian War in north Italy in 1859; but it was in the American Civil War that methods of constructing, maintaining, and operating railways in war were first worked out. In this development the industrial supremacy of the North gave her an overwhelming advantage, which was not fully utilized until experience had taught her generals the limitations and possibilities of the new arm. Perhaps the greatest railway achievement was the supply and maintenance of the armies which, in 1863 and 1864, advanced over 300 miles from their base at the river port of Nashville to Chattanooga and Atlanta. This alone made possible General Sherman's march through Georgia, which cut off the Gulf States from the heart of the South in the Carolinas and Virginia. Such an increase in the effective radius of action from the base of supplies marks one of the chief effects of railways in the conduct of war, and hence on all strategical problems.

Thanks to the geographical conditions the United States hold a position in the world which is entirely unique, largely but not altogether to their advantage. With no neighbours except Mexico and Canada, the nation has little need of defence: its resources are not drained like those of the states of the European continent, in order to maintain a maximum of military force. It can only engage in war by crossing the ocean, or by attacking Canada or Mexico; in other words the chances of its becoming involved in war are immensely

diminished. Its vast extent of territory gives it a wide range of natural products, and therefore makes it less dependent than any other on importation from abroad. The Americans, as has been often remarked, can try a system of thoroughgoing protection with less immediate detriment to their comfort than any other people. On the other hand this same wide range of territory intensifies the opposition of interests and parties within the nation. The negro problem, so urgent to the south, does not affect the west. The commercial relations of the Pacific coast are different from those of the Atlantic. The farmers of the west are apt to think that the manufacturers of the east are economically their enemies. Such antagonisms may of course exist in any country; but the greater its extent, the more inevitable, and in a sense the more justifiable they become.

North America, largely through the geographical conditions already mentioned, has been able to show the world the first specimens of two new phenomena, one of which remains unique. The earlier English colonies were allowed by the mother-country to manage their own affairs, subject to control in certain respects. Having a new land to themselves, with no subject population to complicate things (except the negroes, who being slaves counted for nothing politically), they developed a social system of their own, largely based on the materials in law, religion, and habits of thought which they had brought with them, but modified to suit the new conditions. It was the first time in history that civilized men had had such an opportunity, except the Greek colonists who founded cities in Sicily and elsewhere. The control of the mother-country, slight as it was, was felt to be injurious to the colonies, being worked for the supposed commercial advantage of England, and so led to their revolt. Since gaining their independence, the United States have developed what must be called a new nationality. Hostility to England was naturally a strong feeling at the beginning,

but geography has done more. The sense of their unique position, of being separated by the broad Atlantic from the other civilized nations, and of having indefinite room for expansion, has been the chief intellectual element. Climate possibly has contributed something. At any rate the world has been enriched during the nineteenth century by the establishment of a new and vigorous nation, with a strong and separate character of its own, in spite of its identity in language with England, and close affinity in other respects.

Great Britain learned a political lesson from the loss of her American colonies, and also realized the unsoundness of the economic theories on which were based the measures that had induced the Americans to revolt. Hence she has allowed Canada full self-government, and the same thing has happened in South Africa, and in Australasia, where also the white settlers found the aborigines vanish before them. The result is that the British empire contradicts what has hitherto been an axiom of political geography, that a state which was not enclosed in a ring-fence was in a position of serious weakness, and might be expected to use every effort to make its territories conterminous. Steam and the electric telegraph have done something by facilitating communications; but the knowledge that the slight control which Britain still exercises will never be used for her own separate benefit or without the free consent of the Dominions has done more. Without indulging in any predictions as to the future, we may safely cite the present relations between Great Britain and the Dominions, as showing how completely political inferences drawn from geography may be falsified by the introduction of a new condition into the problem.

The westward expansion of the United States from the original area of the thirteen colonies on the Atlantic coast was mainly the natural advance of a growing people along the path of least resistance. Canada, to the north, was safe under the British flag. To the south the change of climate

barred popular expansion into the West Indies, most of which also belonged to various European powers. The first great step was taken by the purchase of the Louisiana territories from France in 1803, a purchase greatly facilitated by Napoleon's experience of the difficulty of holding overseas possessions against Britain's naval power. It is, however, probable that the predominance of settlers from the United States in the white population of these territories would have led in time to their incorporation, even apart from the purchase. This westward spread of the population was directly responsible for the later acquisitions of Texas and the northern part of Mexican territory in 1845 and 1848 respectively, and of the Oregon territory.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century the continental territory of the States had been fully occupied, though by no means fully developed, and hence part of the pressure towards expansion was directed overseas. Here geographical situation and political conditions determined the directions taken. The position of the Hawaian Islands as the nearest group in the Pacific Ocean fostered a close intercourse between them and the States; it focussed American missionary and trading enterprise on them, and so developed a relationship which led naturally to a protectorate in 1851 and annexation in 1898.

The chief recent expansion has, however, been directed southwards. The industrial developments which have made the raw materials of the Hot Belt essential to all the great industrial states have led those states to acquire control of undeveloped inter-tropical lands. This process led to the partition of Africa among the industrial powers of Europe; but by its Monroe Doctrine the United States had already warned the European powers off the New World, and Britain, the only power which in the nineteenth century could have challenged that doctrine, did in fact support it. So the undeveloped inter-tropical lands of the Americas were at

the close of that century still unclaimed by any other industrial power. The proximity of Cuba and the close commercial interests of the United States in that island made it the first objective when at last the pressure towards expansion overcame the traditional dislike of her citizens to any policy savouring of imperialism. The war with Spain in 1898 ended in the establishment of control over Cuba and the annexation of Porto Rico and the Phillipines. This advance increased the interests of the States in the Caribbean lands and paved the way for the acquisition of the Panama Canal Zone and the establishment of virtual protectorates over the republics of Panama, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Santo Domingo, by virtue of which the United States is now an imperial power controlling considerable areas in which its citizens are present only as a dominant class maintained by the support of the home country, a position similar to that of the Europeans in inter-tropical Africa and south Asia.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE NEW EUROPE

The Balkan Wars of 1912–13 and the Great War of 1914–18, with the resulting redistributions of territory, offer many examples of the relations of geography and history. In this chapter we can only note a few of the more important of them, since a full treatment would require a volume.

The Balkan peninsula is mostly composed of rugged highlands, and those fertile and accessible lowlands which are the populous areas are scattered. The chief of these lowlands are: (1) one in the north-west, which is physically a part of the middle Danube basin and ethnically the home of the main mass of the Serbs; (2) in the north-east the southern half of the lower Danube basin, which together with (3) the Maritza valley in the south-east is the home of the Bulgars; (4) the narrow plains on the south coast inhabited by Greeks; and (5) the Vardar valley and neighbouring basins in the south-west which are inhabited by a very mixed population. The peninsula contains no one principal focus of routes and no central populous area capable of forming a nucleus for the union of its peoples; while through it runs one of the chief land-ways of the world. This is the way from Europe to Asia Minor, now marked by the railways from Belgrade to Constantinople and Salonika. This, and other ways, have been for ages the routes of migrating peoples and of armies. They have made the peninsula a passage land between richer areas and so intensified the lack of unity which arises from the distribution of its more populous areas. This lack of geographical unity has also been aided

by the attraction of the great imperial city at the Bosphorus crossing, which always outshone any national centre in the Balkans.

The gradual partial emancipation of the Balkan subject peoples had by 1908 established four independent Christian kingdoms—Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bulgaria—which together had territories considerably greater than that of Turkey in Europe, and populations equal to the whole of the Turks. Each of these kingdoms was also far more compact and homogeneous than the Turkish Empire, and probably better organized. Hence, in alliance, they were able to expel the Turks from Europe. This alliance became possible when the revival of Turkish nationalism led to increased pressure on their subject peoples and so enabled Serbs, Bulgars, and Greeks to forget for a while their mutual animosities and unite in the Balkan League to attack their common enemy in the first Balkan War—Sept. 1912 to May 1913. The positions of the several states threw the brunt of the attack on the Bulgars, who defeated the chief Turkish armies and drove them back to the defences of Constantinople; while the Serbs and Greeks occupied the territory to the westward.

At this point the wider geographical relations of the Balkans came into play. German aims were partly directed towards south-west Asia, and neither Austria nor Germany was willing to see the Balkan League become a stable power; while Russia and the Western Powers were also interested in the control of the Straits. Hence the armies of the League were checked before they attacked Constantinople; though Turkey was compelled to cede all her territory west of the Enos-Midia line.

Before the war both Serbia and Bulgaria suffered from lack of free access to the sea. Serbia had no coast and Bulgaria only one on the Black Sea. Hence each claimed territory reaching to the sea. For Serbia the best route

was, and is, by the Vardar valley to Salonika. But that valley was claimed by Bulgaria, and the port by Greece; and the way to the sea allotted to Serbia in the division was that by the Drin valley to the Adriatic, through northern Albania. But here again other states intervened. Austria and Italy disliked the appearance of a third power on the Adriatic, especially just at its entrance; and they succeeded in persuading the Great Powers to establish an independent Albania. The Albanians had a good claim to independence on the 'principle of nationality'; but this action upset the pre-arranged division of the conquered territory very much to the disadvantage of Serbia, who naturally demanded a redivision of the remainder. This demand led to quarrels which broke up the League, and Bulgaria attacked her late allies. They were joined by Rumania, and Turkey took the opportunity to recapture Adrianople. Thus Bulgaria was surrounded by enemies and compelled to surrender, and only the influence of the Great Powers saved her from complete dismemberment.

The distribution of territory which followed has in part survived the Great War. Serbia obtained most of the Vardar valley, but not access to the sea; and here her successor, Yugo-Slavia, is still held off from her easiest route to the sea by a narrow strip of Greek territory. And, though she is able by arrangement to use the port of Salonika, such a boundary cannot be regarded as stable, especially where the port is held by the weaker state. Bulgaria gained, and has since lost, coast on the Ægean Sea, whose value was much diminished by the loss of Adrianople, since that fortress controls the route by the Maritza valley to this coast. Rumania obtained and has kept a part of north-eastern Bulgaria, which served to push the boundary back from her great bridge over the Danube at Cernavoda and the railway to Constantsa.

Bulgaria was thus deprived of her most important gains

and a substantial part of her former territory. Yet her strategic importance was greatly increased because her territory now touched both the Black and Ægean Seas, and hence all land routes from Turkey to Europe must pass through it. The 1913 settlement in the Balkans was obviously unstable: it left Bulgaria resentful, and still stronger than either Greece or Serbia: it left Serbia cut off from the sea: it gave Greece a strip of coast north of the Ægean, cutting off her neighbours from the seaports of Salonika and Kavalla, which she had not power to hold against attack from the hinterland: and it increased the immediate obstacles in the path of Austro-German eastward expansion without creating a power strong enough to check that ambition.

A year after this Balkan settlement Austria-Hungary upset it by forcing a quarrel on Serbia; this act at once provoked a threat of Russian interference, met by a German ultimatum which precipitated the Great War. The German plans for a war against France and Russia had been carefully laid. The great distances and the poor railway system of Russia made Russian mobilization a comparatively slow process, and this led the Germans to attempt to crush France before Russia's armies could act. The military positions on the Franco-German frontier were discussed in chapter iii (see pp. 31–4); but the Germans evaded a direct attack, preferring the political risks incurred by a violation of Belgian neutrality, an act which immediately brought Britain into the war.

This step changed the scope of the war. At once Britain and Germany, respectively the strongest Powers engaged, became the chief protagonists, and the naval position became of prime importance. The geographical factors affecting this may be briefly stated. The Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) had two separate coasts. Of these Austria-Hungary's coast on the Adriatic was the

less important because of the difficulty of access inland which had checked maritime development, and her weak navy was easily penned into the Adriatic by French and British fleets with a convenient base at Malta. The German coast on the North and Baltic Seas was the base of a great mercantile marine and navy, and hence the chief scene of the naval war was the North Sea.

The North Sea coast of Germany is in two nearly equal sections, which trend northward and westward from the mouth of the Elbe for somewhat less than 200 miles in a direct line. It is low-lying, and fringed by small islands which were strongly fortified. In front of the estuary of the Elbe lies Heligoland, also fortified, and the length of the curving line of the outer coast through Heligoland is only some 250 miles. This sheltered coast formed a very strong base for the German navy, backed by the technical resources of her great seaports. Midway in it the Kiel Canal gave a safe route to the Baltic, and, since the only other route through the shallow Danish channels is much longer and more difficult for large ships, and the part of Russia's navy in this sea was weak, the German navy was able to command the Baltic.

Outside the Baltic the British navy was the strongest force, and the position of Great Britain in respect to the German coast gave it very favourable bases for the blockade which gradually undermined the enemy's resources. The sea was too wide (about 300 miles) for a German squadron to cross and return in darkness, even in midwinter; hence raids were attended with great risk to the weaker navy. All the German overseas possessions were at once cut off from the fatherland and reduced early in the war.

The naval blockade and the trench warfare on the Western front, which followed on the check of the first invasion, determined the essential character of the war. It was a siege of the Central Powers; though the ring of

investment was never quite complete. And the principal events of the war were those by which the ring was tightened and those in which the besieged endeavoured to break it. The Central Powers held the great military advantage of the inner lines, with all it implies in shorter communications made fully available by the excellence of their railways and roads. The Outer Powers had the still greater advantage of access to the world's material resources, but were handicapped by long and difficult lines of communication, especially between Russia and the Western Allies, which made effective co-ordination very difficult.

The Baltic route to Russia was at once closed. The second route from the Black Sea passes the defiles of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, both of which are so narrow that it is easy for the Power in control of the land to close them to any vessel. Any other route for heavy traffic and war material involved first a long land journey from the populous areas of Russia, between the Volga and the western frontiers, to either the Arctic or the Pacific Ocean, and then a long sea voyage. The Pacific route was far too long to be of value. The Arctic route was closed by ice in winter, until the construction of a railway to Alexandrovsk gave an all-year route which was, however, of small capacity. Hence the Straits commanded by Constantinople formed a position of prime strategic importance.

Turkey and Bulgaria, holding this position and the landway to it from Europe, were therefore states whose alliance was of great value to the Central Powers. Both were land powers, with no direct knowledge of the influence of sea power, and greatly impressed by the military might of Germany. Hence they believed in the ultimate victory of the Central Powers, and after some bargaining joined them in the hope of obtaining compensation for their losses in 1913 and earlier. Their accession added little to the effective population of the Central Powers; but it increased

their food resources in much greater proportion; it greatly extended the length of the besieging lines; and, most important of all, it cut the one really effective route by which the Western Allies could supply munitions to Russia and so reduced the effective military power of Russia, and later of Rumania also. At the same time it enabled the Central Powers to threaten the Suez Canal and, while the strategic value of the canal was far less than that of the Straits, its loss would have been a blow to Britain.

The far south-eastern sections of the front in Mesopotamia and the Suez isthmus were connected with the Central Powers only by a single incomplete railway, and were of minor importance to them. The British advance from Egypt showed that the desert barrier is much less formidable than in earlier wars, now that army transport depends more on railways and motor vehicles than on draught animals. Mesopotamia lay so far away that it seemed at first sight of little importance. Its port of Basra as a base for German submarines might have been a source of danger to British vessels on the Indian Ocean. Basra is also the port for the Persian oilfields, and thus was of great value in a war in which petrol was essential for the air service and for transport. Mesopotamia was also an advanced post for the defence of India, and in conjunction with Syria to the west it could cut off the Turks from Arabia and so facilitate the Arab revolt which divided the Moslem world and helped to check any widespread revolt among the Mohammedan subjects of Britain, France, and Russia.

The occupation of Salonika in the nearer south-east by a Franco-British force was one of the moves dictated by the geographical conditions of the siege. This port was the only one by which the Western Allies could maintain contact with the Serbian forces. The army here controlled the only practicable route between Greece and central

Europe and so prevented Greece from joining the Central Powers; and had the Germans controlled Greek harbours, with land access to them, their submarines might have closed the eastern Mediterranean to their enemies. Further from Salonika it was conceivably possible for the army to advance to the aid of Serbia and Rumania, and to cut the route between Turkey and central Europe. The mountainous character of the country made this very difficult, and in fact it was not attempted, but the possibility kept a large enemy force in the region.

In the siege ring round the Central Powers three gaps were formed by neutral states. Those of the Scandinavian countries and Holland lasted throughout the war, but the southern gap was closed when Italy declared war on Austria. Here the pre-war boundary had been drawn so as to give every advantage of position to Austria, who held the Alps and most of their southern foothills. Part of these slopes, with the peninsula of Istria and Dalmatia, were the Austrian sections of 'Italia Irridenta.' Since Italy's main aim was to obtain this territory she was compelled to attack, and her armies were immediately involved in difficult mountain country. The main advance was made north-eastward towards Trieste and the low passes behind it which offer the only practicable route for invasion of the Danube lands from Italy. But this route is flanked by the eastern Alps and open to attack from their valleys, of which the chief is that of the Trentino which carries the road and railway from the Brenner Pass. Hence the Italians were also compelled to hold these valleys to safeguard their main advance. So long as Austria was mainly concerned with the more dangerous Russian attacks in her Polish territories the Italians were able to advance slowly. But when the Central Powers were able to attack in force the invading army was rapidly driven back into Italy as far as the river Piave. The course of the war here once again demonstrated the almost

decisive advantage which the holders of such a mountain region have against attackers from the lowland when numbers and equipment are not very unequal.

On the Adriatic Sea also the geographical advantages were all on the Austrian side. The Italian coast is smooth and low-lying, with no considerable inlets or good harbours. The opposite coast is a complete contrast: here the submerged edges of the Dalmatian Alps fringe the coast with mountainous islands, with numerous sheltered channels and harbours, all of which are easily defensible. These channels gave the Austrian vessels many ways out to sea; and the sea is so narrow (about 100 miles) that raiding squadrons could easily cross in a night. Hence the Italian navy, though much the stronger, was unable to pen the Austrian fleet into any harbour, to force it to action in the open, or to prevent raids on the exposed Italian coast. The geographical conditions on the eastern and north-eastern borders of the Adriatic basin baffled all the Italian attacks until the Dual Monarchy had collapsed. As when the Romans conquered Illyria, so in the Great War, the Danube lands were effectively protected on this side and only fell to attacks from other quarters. So 'history repeats itself,' because the constant physical environment produces similar effects at different periods.

The principal struggles of the war were necessarily those on the Western front, which was nearer to the most important bases on both sides; but the results of the actual fighting were inconclusive. The complete defeat of the Central Powers in the end was due to the exhaustion of their resources by the enormous drain of the war, combined with the blockade which prevented the replacement of many essential materials.

In the redistribution of large parts of European territory after the war the victors endeavoured, on the whole honestly, to apply the 'principle of nationalities.' In the west this

caused no great change except that Alsace-Lorraine was restored to France; but in the wide zone which lies between the German and Italian peoples on the west and the Russians on the east there has been a transformation of the political map.[1] The southern part of this area was the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the northern was subject to Russia. It is now occupied by ten separate states, only the southern four of which had any independent status before the war, and the territories of those four have been greatly changed.

The real western frontier of the land inhabited by the Russian peoples is a series of marshy depressions, west of which lie Finland, the Baltic Provinces, and Poland. Before the war these lands were parts of the Russian empire; but in none of them did Russians form any large part of the population.

Finland is clearly marked off by marshland and tundra to east and north, and sea to west and south, and so is a distinct region. Its people also are distinct from both Swedes to the south-west and Russians to the south-east and so able to form a separate nation.

South of the Gulf of Finland the former Baltic Provinces are now the two republics of Esthonia and Latvia. This is a region of harsh climate, poor soil, and no mineral wealth, and much of it is still forest and swamp. It was unattractive and, in the Middle Ages, difficult of access, and so was one of the last parts of Europe to be reached by Christianity and civilization. It was conquered for Christendom by the knights of the Teutonic Order near the close of the crusading period, and the inhabitants were reduced to serfdom. At the Reformation the knights became barons, and their descendants remained as the 'Balts,' German landlords ruling native serfs who lived in isolated villages and retained their own language and much of their traditions while following their masters in religious organization. When the

[1] See map at end.

Great War and the Russian Revolution broke the power of the Balts the peasantry seized the land and formed two small states whose limits have been determined mainly by the distribution of their languages and of the Lutheran Church. The Letts are centred in the lower part of the Duna valley and Latvia includes most of the two former provinces separated by that river, with Riga as its capital; while the area to the north is Esthonia. To the south is Lithuania, a similar area in which the native peasantry were subject to Polish or Polonized landlords and the religion is Roman Catholic.

Poland is much the greatest of the six new states, with a population of some 25,000,000, nearly equal to that of the other five together. It was an important state for some centuries before the partitions of the eighteenth century divided its territories between Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Physically Poland is merely a section of the great lowland; it has a definite nuclear region in the valley of the Vistula, but no well-marked frontiers except to the south. The contact of the Poles with civilization was made by way of the Moravian Gate on their south-western border and made them a Roman Catholic people linked with Western Europe, so marking them off from the Greek Orthodox Christians of east Europe whose contact with the Mediterranean was by way of the Black Sea and Constantinople. At the Reformation the Poles remained Catholics, and were thus further differentiated from their western neighbours, who became Protestants. Hence to east and west the Poles are marked off by religious boundaries; while to the south they are separated from their co-religionists by mountains.

In four areas the determination of Poland's boundaries has been specially difficult. In the north the Vistula reaches the sea through lands peopled by Germans. To obtain effective contact with the sea, which means contact with all the maritime peoples, Poland needed control of

the mouth of her chief river. The difficulties of the position have been evaded by the erection of the Free State of Danzig at the mouth, in economic union with Poland. In the south-west corner the mining and industrial area of Upper Silesia is peopled by both Poles and Germans. Here the boundary has been drawn by the League of Nations, on the basis of a plebiscite of the inhabitants and with reference to economic relations. It is an irregular line through a densely peopled district with many provisions for economic connexions across it. As a boundary it may serve so long as both parties wish to avoid friction; but on it either can, at any time, find grounds for quarrel. In the south-east the Poles have extended their rule over eastern Galicia, a land of Ruthenian peasantry and Polish landlords and townsmen which is now valuable for its oil-wells; while in the north-east they have taken possession of the Vilna district, in which the peasants are mostly Lithuanians, and their claim is disputed by Lithuania. The settlement of this last boundary is referred to the League of Nations; but it seems impossible that any final adjustment of Poland's eastern boundaries can be made until Russia is again a stable state.

The former Austro-Hungarian territory within the mountain belt of east central Europe, which is the central part of the Danube lands, has been divided among five states. The Czech area in Bohemia and Moravia is one of the most clearly defined geographical units in central Europe (see pp. 116, 257). Slovakia is bounded on the north by the Carpathians, but it has no physical barriers elsewhere on its borders except towards Moravia. On the south it has been extended on to the Hungarian plain, an extension which gives it an east-west longitudinal route connecting the mouths of its valleys, and brings it to the Danube in the south-west, but which also includes a large number of Magyars in its population. It is extended eastward by

a narrow strip which gives contact with Rumania, a fact of considerable political importance, but includes a Ruthenian area in the new state. Slovakia is a hill country, and is thus distinct from the Magyar lowland; but all its valley-ways lead down to that lowland, and it is almost cut off from the Czech lands by the Western and Little Carpathians. Hence the new Czecho-Slovak republic consists of two regions of very different politico-geographical strength and stability, between which communications are also difficult.

The great basin lowland of the middle Danube might appear destined to form a single state in so far as physical barriers are principal factors in determining political boundaries. But here, as very often elsewhere, the mountain ridge is not the dividing line between different peoples. More generally and more naturally that division occurs near the foot of the mountains, separating a highland people from lowlanders. This is markedly the case round the Danube lowland, and the attempt to draw political boundaries in accordance with linguistic divisions has brought them well down on to the lowland all round Hungary, a decision helped by the facts that Hungary was a defeated enemy while the surrounding peoples were allies of the victors. To the east the highland of Transylvania was the home of the Rumanians during the early Middle Ages, and after the close of the barbarian invasions they gradually spread out on to the surrounding lowlands, reaching southward and eastward to the Danube and the Dniester, but only a short distance westward. To the south-west the bordering highland was occupied by the Yugo-Slav peoples, who have similarly spread out from it over the southern part of the lowland in the valleys of the Sava and Drava rivers and on the other side to the Adriatic shore. To the west the Alpine valleys and the upper basin of Vienna are peopled by Germans and form the present Austria. Hence in the basin there are two states: a lowland

Magyar state of Hungary, with its focus in the central city of Budapest and with very artificial and arbitrary boundaries: and to the south-west Yugo-Slavia, which extends beyond the Danube watershed; while on the north, east, and west, neighbouring states hold the margins of the central lowland.

Thus the Danube lands are now divided; but it is still true that they form one region (cf. p. 257), and while the division has gone far to satisfy some justifiable aspirations it has also destroyed an economic unit and caused great distress. Perhaps the chief sufferers have been in Austria, since Vienna was formerly the economic as well as the political capital; but the division of the region by political and economic boundaries has been injurious to most of the peoples and the restoration of adequate facilities for the exchange of their various products seems a necessary preliminary to the recovery of prosperity. The germ of such agreements may exist in the 'Little Entente' of Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo-Slavia, and Rumania, if that accord can be extended.

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